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THE GREAT CONDÉ

AND

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A HISTORICAL SKETCH.

31584

BY

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VOL. II.

LONDON:
T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.
1873.

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THE GREAT CONDÉ AND THE PERIOD OF THE FRONDE.

CHAPTER I.

Amidst the majestic solitudes and the sylvan pleasures of her delightful retreat, Anne of Austria found grateful repose from the fierce strife in which the preceding twelve months of her Regency had been passed. The Court was joyous and brilliant; the beauty, accomplishments, and modest graces of Mazarin's eldest nieces, Laura Mancini and the Countess Martinozzi, who appeared for the first time as members of the Queen's circle, brightened it with charms which owed nothing of their lustre to meretricious art. The amnesty stipulated in the treaty of Ruel, by re-opening France to illustrious exiles of the high

nobility, gave additional splendour to the royal retinue. The Duke of Vendôme, returning from his long sojourn in Italy, repaired to Compeigne with his eldest son, the Duke of Mercœur; and even Madame de Chevreuse, notwithstanding her recent treason at Brussels, ventured back to her beloved Paris. Anne of Austria, incensed by a step which she regarded as a new act of defiance, ordered the Duchess to quit the kingdom. But the mandate was almost immediately revoked in deference to the remonstrances of the First President Molé; and the Regent, softened by a penitent letter of submission, allowed her old friend to reappear at Court, and even to resume some of the privileges of a favourite.

The tranquillity of Compeigne, however, was soon disturbed by the breaking out of dissensions between Condé and the Cardinal. The Prince had naturally expected that his birth, his genius, and the great services he had rendered the Crown, would entitle him to the lead in the Council of State. But he found, to his indignation and disgust, that, peace being re-established, he was reduced to play a part subordinate to that of the Minister. The popular sarcasm, which designated him Mazarin's Captain of the Guard, cut him to the quick, and an event occurred which blew up

into a fierce blaze the smouldering fire of his jealous resentment. The Duke of Vendôme, a cowardly and incapable Prince, pining for the sunshine of Court favour, from which he had been so long banished, proposed a marriage between his eldest son and Laura Mancini. Mazarin eagerly grasped at an illustrious alliance which had long been floating in his ambitious dreams. Mercœur fell captive to the charms of the beautiful Italian. The Regent warmly promoted the match; and the Cardinal's dower to his niece, the post of High Admiral of France for Vendôme, with succession to his son, and an enormous sum of money, was not unworthy the rank of her intended husband. But the House of Vendôme, the fruit of Henry IV.'s amour with Gabrielle d'Estrées, and exalted by the prodigal favour of its progenitor to an equal footing with the legitimate Princes of the Blood, had always been regarded by these, and especially by the Condé family, with scorn and hatred. The great dignity which the Regent was now about to confer on its inglorious chief, out of complaisance for her Minister, she had frequently refused to the brilliant services of the Prince; and he thought he discerned a perfidious design, on the part of the Court, to depress his power, and to restore, at the expense of his

just claims, the fallen greatness of a rival family. The Dowager Princess, after the peace of Ruel, had reconciled her children. Madame de Longueville had recovered her hold upon the affections of her fiery brother. Smarting under the cutting disdain with which the Regent had received her at St. Germain, the Duchess now worked so artfully upon Condé's passions, that, giving free rein to his wrath, he publicly denounced the marriage, and all who were in any way parties to it, in outrageous terms of menace and insult. And although the alarmed Minister pretended to abandon the project of alliance with Vendôme, his haughty protector quitted Compeigne in high dudgeon, and retired to his Government of Burgundy.

Condé's departure left in the mind of the Regent a sense of inexpressible relief, but the position of public affairs made his support indispensable to the Government. The state of the Capital was far from satisfactory. The well-disposed inhabitants mourned the depression of trade, and the desolate aspect of deserted palaces and mansions; the evil-disposed saw with regret that the Regent and her Minister were beyond their reach. De Retz, Beaufort, and their partizans fomented the general discontent. The Cardinal was again freely assailed in the Chambers, and in

virulent brochures. The Duke of Orleans returned to the Luxembourg amidst extravagant demonstrations of popular delight. Vast multitudes thronged forth to meet him, weeping with joy, and pressing eagerly to kiss his feet; and all the public bodies came to offer him their homage. Condé paid a flying visit to the Capital, and although he had found a malicious pleasure in spreading the belief that it was his habit, during the war, to feast on the ears of the fat burghers he had killed or taken, his dauntless bearing as he traversed, unattended, the crowded thoroughfares, elicited applause. But an empty coach bearing Mazarin's arms, sent into the city to test the temper of the population, was smashed to pieces by the mob; and some of the Regent's servants who ventured to show themselves in the streets, in the royal liveries, were cruelly beaten. Anne of Austria, naturally incensed by these evidences of hostile feeling, gave ungracious answers to the deputations that arrived from Paris, in rapid succession, to entreat her to return. The pressure, however, of financial difficulties, which the Parliament refused to consider during the absence of the Court, and the re-appearance of Condé at Compeigne in an amiable mood, after a time, rendered her more compliant. The Prince,

appeased by the Minister's submission, and disliking the principles, the tactics, and the chief heroes of the Fronde, pledged himself to conduct the Court in safety to the Palais Royal.

Under his protection the King, the Regent, and the Cardinal set out from Compeigne in the middle of a sultry August. Through one of those sudden revolutions of public feeling, which have made the fickleness of the French people proverbial, their entry into the Capital was an extraordinary triumph. The loyal enthusiasm of the citizens was only equalled by their considerate delicacy. Everything that could suggest the slightest recollection of past troubles, even the chains which at that time guarded the entrances of the streets, were carefully removed from view. Strangest of all, Cardinal Mazarin, whom every day for years the Parisians had loaded with curses and insults, found himself, as he sat at one of the doors of the King's coach, a popular idol. Wherever he passed he heard nothing except the language of adulation. The sinister-looking outlaws of society, who herded in the foul dens in the neighbourhood of Notre Dame, proved false to their Archbishop; the fish hags were unfaithful to Beaufort in their clamorous admiration of the handsome Cardinal. At the opposite door of the coach Condé sat, with

iron countenance, noting the capricious humour of the rabble in silent disdain. The evening was far advanced before a slow progress of many hours in the stifling heat, through the choked streets, brought the Sovereigns to the Palais Royal. The noble halls of Richelieu blazed with light, and were thronged to suffocation by every person of eminence, Mazarinist or Frondeur, in Paris. Even De Retz and Beaufort, borne along in spite of themselves by the rushing tide of loyal re-action, were there to offer reluctant homage. In the view of this splendid assembly, Anne of Austria, radiant with joy, turned to Condé with tearful eyes, and pledged her eternal gratitude for the services he had rendered the King. So strong did she feel herself, in the overwhelming revulsion of popular favour, that she proffered De Retz the option of resigning his Coadjutorship or paying a visit of reconciliation to the Cardinal. The discomfited prelate—on whom vexation at the surprising turn of affairs brought a serious illness—bowed before the storm, had a most affectionate conference with his complacent rival, and then retired to the precincts of Notre Dame to watch warily, until the rapid mutation of public feeling offered another opportunity of hurling him from power.

Condé was now Arbiter of France. His position was such; so favourable a concurrence of circumstances seconded his ambition, that had he used his advantages with ordinary wisdom his power might have become as stable as it was vast. In re-establishing the Court at the Palais Royal, he had redeemed his pledges to the Regent, and was now free to pursue an independent course. His reconciliation with his sister secured to him the undivided allegiance of all the members and connexions of his family, and enlisted in his personal interests Bouillon, Turenne (whom he compelled the Regent to pardon), Marsillac, and other powerful chiefs of the feudal party. He held in his hands the balance between the contending factions in the State, and it was evident to all that the scale into which he threw his sword must preponderate.

To the Government his support was absolutely essential in the dangers that beset it. The exuberant loyalty that greeted the return of the sovereigns to Paris seemed to have evaporated in the heat and tumult of the long summer day. Madame de Chevreuse, rendered prudent by reverses, but still preserving her political fire and address, had infused new life into the Fronde, and brought it under the control of her intriguing

spirit. Weaving her spells around the feeble mind of Orleans, she gradually detached him from Anne of Austria; while the witcheries of her beautiful and profligate daughter held fast the Coadjutor in amorous toils. The defection of the Lieutenant-General could only be supplied by a firm alliance with Condé; and had the Prince, following in the footsteps of his father, steadily sustained the Regent and her Minister, there was hardly any concession which he might not have obtained from their gratitude or necessities.

It was also open to him, by taking his stand with Molé on the Declaration of the 24th of October, to which he had twice given his sanction, to become the guardian of good government, and public rights, against the excesses of authority and of faction; and, discarding mere personal or party aims, to guide the destinies in serving the highest interests of France. This would have been the course most consonant with his glory, his dignity, and an enlightened appreciation of his own advantage.

It was possible for him, as a third alternative, to drive Cardinal Mazarin from the kingdom, and boldly to seize the reins of Government. This was the course urged upon him by De Retz. Any one of the three lines of policy,

resolutely and consistently pursued, must almost certainly have insured to him for many years a commanding position in the State. But his career offers a memorable example of the pernicious effect of early and dazzling success, even upon a nature endowed with noble qualities, and with the rarest intellectual faculties. His splendid genius, gifted with such unerring vision, so fruitful of rapid and daring combinations in war, seemed bewildered and stricken with sterility in the strife of politics. It became the sport of his capricious passions and wayward impulses; equally bereft of the vivifying light of patriotic principles, and of the resolute sagacity to shape out and pursue a line of vulgar ambition. Listening now to his sister and De Retz, now to the Regent, he veered about a hundred times in a day, in a state of perplexity and vacillation that amused and astonished friends and foes.

Madame de Longueville was unwearied in her efforts to draw him over to the Fronde. She artfully induced him to test the sincerity of the Regent's professions by claiming the fulfilment of a promise, made after the treaty of Ruel, to hand over Pont de l'Arche, the key of Normandy, to his brother-in-law. Anne of Austria and Mazarin both declined to surrender this stronghold to the

Governor of the province, for reasons of State. The Prince pressed his suit with violence, and at length, exasperated by repeated refusals, grossly insulted the Cardinal. At the conclusion of a stormy interview, he shook his fist in the Minister's face, gave him a fillip on the cheek, and rushed from the room shouting, with ironical laughter, "Adieu, Mars." Intelligence of this unseemly quarrel soon reached the Coadjutor, exalting him on the wings of hope to the pinnacle of triumphant ambition. The darling scheme, over which he had long brooded, of a coalition of great nobles and popular magistrates, headed by the hero of Rocroi and Lens against his Italian rival, was about at length to assume shape and consistency. Hastening to the Hotel de Condé he offered the Prince the support of the Fronde, and was received with open arms. The great majority of the nobles thronged to range themselves under the most brilliant warrior of the age; and Orleans, wheedled by Madame de Chevreuse, gave a feeble countenance to the new confederacy. Mazarin's downfall seemed assured. The Palais Royal was deserted, and the Regent was devoured by vexation and resentment. But she knew the Prince better than he knew himself, and, fortified by a deep purpose of ultimately vindicating the royal

authority, she had the art to dissemble the hatred with which his conduct inspired her. Sending for the Duke of Orleans, she commissioned him to offer Condé Pont de l'Arche for his brother-in-law, and to propose a conference for the complete arrangement of the Prince's differences with her Minister.

Condé had already committed himself to the Coadjutor, and had allowed the Prelate to compromise himself and his friends by a hostile attitude towards the Government. But his pride was soothed by the submission of Anne of Austria and the penitent pleadings of the Cardinal; and his instinctive aversion from the Fronde, a conspiracy, as he termed it, of "petticoats and alcoves," was not lessened by familiar intercourse with its chiefs. Without consulting his new allies, or paying the slightest regard to their interests, he closed with the offers of the Regent. Lenet, a councillor of the Parliament of Dijon, the able and faithful partizan of the House of Condé, and La Riviere, as representative of the Duke of Orleans, who had assumed the office of mediator, conducted the negotiations with Mazarin, who was not in a position to resist any demand. In a few hours a secret treaty was drawn up and signed by the Regent, Condé,

Mazarin, and La Riviere. In consideration of frank and thorough co-operation with the Court, the Prince was not only invested with the entire control and patronage of the army, but was accorded a veto on all civil or ecclesiastical appointments, and on the matrimonial alliances which the Cardinal might desire for his nieces. The conditions of this agreement were carefully concealed from Orleans, whose military functions as Lieutenant-General of the kingdom it transferred to his cousin; La Riviere, in his anxiety to secure for himself the next nomination of the Crown to a seat in the conclave, not having scrupled to betray the interests of his too-confiding master. When De Retz and the Marquis of Noirmoutier, arrived by appointment at the Hotel de Condé to exchange, on the part of the Fronde, the formal ratifications of its new alliance with the Prince, they gathered with dismay, from his embarrassed apologies, that he had used them to serve his ends and then abandoned them. Madame de Longueville, notwithstanding the cession of Pont de l'Arche to her husband, did not spare angry reproaches for the inconstancy of her brother. Her disappointment, however, passed like a summer cloud over their affectionate relations. But although the Coadjutor and his

friends professed to rejoice at having been instrumental in obtaining for Condé satisfaction for his grievances, a bitter sense of having been duped and cast aside rankled in their minds, and prepared a signal retribution for his perfidy.

Anne of Austria had thus, by humiliating sacrifices, dissolved the only combination she would have been unable to resist. But she found Condé's friendship the most intolerable oppression. His exactions for himself or his adherents threatened to reduce the power of the Crown to the merest shadow. And his exactions were less offensive than the manner in which he enforced them. His temper, naturally aspiring and haughty, had become inflamed by uninterrupted prosperity to an extravagant pitch of pride; and the unbridled arrogance that found a distempered delight in provoking quarrels, raised up enemies against him in every quarter. The Prince of Marsillac having taken a fancy to claim the privilege of a tabouret at Court for his wife—perhaps in order to make amends to her for his infidelities—Condé supported his pretensions with such overbearing vehemence that the great body of the nobles, throwing themselves into the question of a petty distinction with as much ardour as if the very existence of their order was at stake, protested

against the claim in tumultuous meetings, which became a serious peril to the Government. Some deputies despatched by the Parliament of Bordeaux to complain of the unjust proceedings of the Duke of Epernon, using some expression that grated on Condé's ear, he threatened to cane them to death. To the Parliament and people he represented the imperious insolence of military force. In the mere wantonness of his presumptuous humour, he planted in Anne of Austria's own bosom the sting of an insult which it would be hardly in the nature of the meekest and lowliest of women to forgive.

The Regent still retained much of her old fondness for admiration, and the younger courtiers were accustomed to do homage to her beauty in piteous sighs, and in poetic effusions breathing the ardour of a consuming passion discreetly tempered by despair. One of the wits most in her favour, the little Marquis of Jarzé, half-crazed by vanity and the approving smiles with which his mistress rewarded his sallies, conceived the idea that she was in love with him. Revealing his good fortune in confidence to Condé, he offered to supplant Mazarin in return for the Prince's friendship. Condé, though highly amused at the little Marquis's self-conceit, promised secresy, and accepted his services; and then, impelled by the spirit of

mischief which possessed him at this period, publicly flouted the Cardinal upon the subject of the Regent's inconstancy. Anne of Austria at first treated the matter with ridicule. At length, irritated by her Minister's evident discomposure, and by the irreverent jests of his tormentor, she drove her infatuated adorer from her presence, with opprobrious epithets that made his blood tingle with shame, and deprived him of his lucrative appointment of captain of her guards. The crestfallen Jarzé resorted for consolation to Condé, who, after laughing heartily at his victim's discomfiture, had the audacity to pass on the Regent the unpardonable affront of insisting that her discarded admirer should be reinstated in his post.

Mazarin was the favourite butt of Condé's biting sarcasms, the object on which he never tired heaping contumely. The wily Italian, in whom the meekness of the dove was tinctured in no inconsiderable degree with the guile of the serpent, bore the scoffs and jeers of the Prince with well-simulated patience. Nevertheless he was secretly contriving a terrible revenge. The Regent and he were goaded by indignities, and even by the instinct of self-preservation, to crush their tyrant. A necessary step towards this end was to isolate the Prince completely, and particu-

larly to raise up an impassable barrier between him and the Fronde. They were seasonably aided in their designs by one of those extraordinary impostures characteristic of the time, which nearly all sprang in grotesque completeness from the teeming brain of the Coadjutor.

After the peace of Ruel the Government, with the consent of the Parliament, had declared itself bankrupt, and postponed, for a year, payment of the interest on a loan which had been chiefly subscribed by the citizens of Paris. The fundholders submitted murmuringly; but the Government breaking faith with them again, when the deferred payments fell due, they were loud in their complaints, and elected representatives, who were termed Syndics, to press their claims. The most notable of the Syndics was Guy Joly, an intimate friend of De Retz, a physician, wit, and demagogue, whose amusing memoirs, erudite and flippant, reveal much of the secret intrigue, and reflect in vivid colours the popular feeling of the time. The Coadjutor, eager to embarrass the Court and Molé, who now strenuously laboured to smooth the difficulties of the Administration, fomented the rising sedition. In order to rouse the people to arms, he concocted an impudent plot in which

Joly was the chief actor. The Syndic, attired in a coat thickly padded and tested to be bullet-proof, came forth for an airing on Cours la Reine, the fashionable promenade. A pistol shot was fired into his coach; but a party of his friends, who, by a fortunate coincidence, were at hand, rushed to his rescue; and a wound on his shoulder, which had been carefully inflicted the day before, was dressed by a sympathising surgeon. In a few hours all Paris rang with the narrow escape of their champion from the assassins of the Court, and the public excitement was at fever heat. Mazarin promptly saw and seized the opportunity of turning the delusion of the citizens to advantage.

The Regent informed Condé, with looks and tones betraying grave anxiety, that the Cardinal had received intelligence of a conspiracy to murder him, as he went to sup with the Duke of Grammont, in revenge for the attack on the Syndic. The Prince, always brave, even to rashness, declared his resolution to face the danger. Yielding, however, to Anne's entreaties, he agreed to prove it by sending his coach with the blinds drawn down, but accompanied by his usual retinue, across the Pont Neuf. When the equipage appeared on the bridge, the Marquis of Bouillaye, quondam

General of the Cavalry of the *portes cocheres*, still in outward seeming a noisy Frondeur, in reality a secret agent of Mazarin, galloping up with an armed band, searched it, killed one of the attendants, and then fled the kingdom. While the Prince's mind was a prey to the angry suspicions suggested by the antecedents of the mad-cap Marquis, the Cardinal produced fabricated evidence that Bouillaye had been the instrument of De Retz and Beaufort. Condé fell blindly into the snare. Spurning the repeated solicitations of the maligned noblemen for a hearing in their own defence, he preferred against them, in the High Court, a charge of assassination, which the law officers of the Crown had instructions to press. Political morality was at so low an ebb that the accusation obtained general credence. The adherents of the accused, dismayed by the fierce wrath of the Prince, and the alleged strength of the proofs in possession of the Government, fell from them. Beaufort, in despair, proposed to fly from Paris; but the Coadjutor, whose clear intellect was never clouded by fear, attended in his place to confront his traducers. He found himself shunned by all as if he were stricken with the plague; but he was sustained, not only by the consciousness of innocence, but by the possession

of a document secretly forwarded to him, as he afterwards discovered, by order of the Regent, which set forth, not only the heads of the indictment about to be laid by the Attorney General, but also the nature of the evidence on which it rested. To the unscrupulous state-craft of Mazarin, France owed the organization of a body of official spies, a baneful legacy of his rule, which long remained an odious feature in the system of French police. These spies were wretches convicted of the most atrocious crimes, to whom immunity and protection were guaranteed in return for infamous services. Some of them now were the witnesses for the Crown. When De Retz, with the rhetorical skill of which he was a master, exposed the inherent improbabilities of the alleged conspiracy, and then sketched the past lives and present functions of the miscreants, stained with the darkest hues of guilt, upon whose unsupported testimony it was sought to convict the Coadjutor Archbishop of Paris, and the grandson of Henry IV., of a detestable crime, indignation and amazement seized the Chamber. A unanimous decree of acquittal was only averted by the declarations of the First President and the law officers that more trustworthy evidence was forthcoming.

Condé was as much taken aback as any one by the revelations reflecting on the character of the Crown witnesses. False pride, however, impelled him to pursue his suit, although he showed his sense of its injustice by offering, if the Coadjutor would, as a mark of deference to him, retire from Paris for three months, to acknowledge the prelate's innocence. But De Retz, now zealously championed by the whole force of the Fronde, flung back insult for insult, and defiance for defiance; and the rage of the hostile factions threatened every moment to deluge Paris with blood. While Condé, delivered up by his headstrong passions, a helpless victim to Mazarin's craft, opened an impassable gulf of hatred between himself and the Fronde, he continued with reckless arrogance to provoke the vengeance of the Court. At the moment when his quarrel with the Coadjutor and Beaufort was charged with the deadliest rancour, a daring outrage upon the royal authority filled up to overflowing the measure of his offences against the Regent.

The most splendid prize in the matrimonial market of France, at this time, was the Duke of Richelieu, the grand nephew and inheritor of the peerage and the enormous wealth of the Great Minister; a timid, impressionable youth of nine-

teen or twenty, who lived at Ruel under the strict tutelage of his strong-willed aunt, the Duchess of Aiguillon. The Duchess, although of irreproachable life herself, had affianced her ward to Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. Among her most intimate friends was Madame de Pons, a clever and charming widow of thirty, sister to Mdlle. Vigean, who had been the object and victim of Condé's capricious fancy. The irregular features and the bewitching graces of person and manner of Madame de Pons were happily signified in her soubriquet of the "ugly Venus." The young Duke found himself enslaved by the covert arts of this fascinating widow; but the reverential awe with which he regarded his aunt, and the circumstance that her consent and that of the Regent were necessary for the validity of a marriage, seemed to oppose an insuperable barrier to the wishes of the lovers. In this difficulty Madame de Pons had recourse to the Duchess of Longueville. Of the numerous dignities bequeathed by the late Cardinal to his nephew the most important was that of Governor of Havre de Grace, the strongest fortress in France. As it was of the highest moment to the House of Condé that this great stronghold should pass from the keeping of the Duchess of Aiguillon, a devoted

servant of the Regent, to the keeping of one of its own adherents, Madame de Longueville warmly espoused the projects of her friend. At her instigation, Condé invited his young kinsman to pass the day with him at a country house near Paris. Madame de Pons happening, by the merest accident, to arrive there at the same time, the authority of the Prince, who took the whole responsibility on himself, and the charms of his mistress, overcame Richelieu's scruples. The marriage was celebrated by Condé's private chaplain, and the newly wedded pair started off, without a moment's delay, to take possession of Havre. Condé also despatched an officer of his own to the same destination, with instructions, should any messenger of the Regent, outstripping the dilatory progress of the lovers, reach the fortress before them, to fling him into the sea and burn his despatches.

The same afternoon the Prince returned to Paris, and afterwards presented himself, beaming with self-satisfaction, at the Regent's evening levée. Anne of Austria was already aware of his morning's work, Richelieu having snatched a moment to write a few penitent lines to his aunt. Smothering her resentment, she coldly remarked to the Prince, that the marriage would probably be annulled on account of its illegality.

He replied, insolently, that a marriage contracted in his presence was indissoluble. Anne then retired to her little grey chamber, consumed by vexation. As she sat brooding over the means of delivering herself from the daily humiliations that stung her proud spirit to madness, Madame d'Aiguillon rushed into the room, and flinging herself at her feet implored justice. Shortly afterwards Madame de Chevreuse arrived, and, with flashing eyes, demanded vengeance for the injury offered to her daughter. The two ladies urged the Regent to arrest Condé, and Madame de Chevreuse tendered the vigorous support of the Fronde. The practicability of freeing themselves from the yoke of their tyrant, by means of an alliance with the Coadjutor and his party, had of late been anxiously pondered by the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin. Anne, therefore, joyfully grasped at the offer of her old friend, and intrusted her with a note inviting De Retz to a secret interview. On the following night the Coadjutor, in the dress of a cavalier, was introduced into the Palace by a private entrance, and remained closeted for some hours with the Regent and the Cardinal. The fiery prelate panted for revenge on the false friend who assailed his honour and his life with such unjust virulence. But his passions

did not render him forgetful of his own interests, or those of his friends. A Cardinal's hat for himself, the post of High Admiral of France for the Duke of Vendôme, with the reversion to the Duke of Beaufort, the restoration of Madame de Chevreuse's old lover Chateauneuf to his forfeited office of Keeper of the Seals, a large sum of money for the ever-needy Madame de Montbazon, and other favours for less prominent adherents of the Fronde, were gladly conceded as the price of his assistance. On these terms he pledged to the Regent his loyal co-operation with Mazarin for the overthrow of their common oppressor.

To accomplish this aim in safety required all the skill of the two deepest political schemers of the age. The great power of Condé, who governed by himself or his adherents one-half of France, and who possessed the entire control of the army; the dazzling prestige that invested him; the vast following of young nobles, whose swords were ever ready to leap forth in defence of their heroic chief; and his own daring genius, which, always at the touch of danger, flashed out in its native splendour, rendered their enterprise one of extraordinary danger. Night after night the Coadjutor went to the Palais Royal in disguise, to

confer with the Minister. More than one warning of these mysterious meetings, veiled though they were by ingenious precautions, reached the Prince. But his haughty confidence in himself, his profound contempt for Mazarin, and the impenetrable duplicity of the Cardinal, effectually blinded him to his peril. Besides, he had taken measures which he considered sufficient to render him secure of timely information, in the event of the Court meditating any serious project against his liberty. He knew that the Regent could not venture to arrest him without the consent of the Lieutenant-General of the realm; and it was notorious that Orleans had no secrets from the Abbé la Riviere. Condé had attached this aspiring ecclesiastic to his interests by ceding to him the nomination to the dignity of Cardinal, which had been granted to the Prince of Conti; and as the Abbé was bound to his master by an oath of secresy, Condé persuaded Orleans to cancel the obligations in all matters relating to himself. The reassuring reports of his new ally contributed to throw him off his guard, and to make him deaf to the entreaties of his mother, sister, and the keen-sighted Marsillac, that he would abstain from attending the meetings of the Council of State. But he was leaning on a broken reed; La Riviere was no

longer in a position to do him service. The Regent had revealed to Madame de Chevreuse the particulars of the secret treaty concluded with Condé. The Duchess used the information to detach the affections of Orleans, already somewhat alienated by the Abbé's want of zeal in furthering his attempts on the chastity of one of his wife's Maids of Honour, from the faithless favourite. Left without protection, Gaston yielded to the energetic pressure of his sister-in-law and the cajolery of the Duchess, and gave an unwilling assent to the arrest of his cousins.

It was at length determined in midnight conclave to seize Condé, Conti, and Longueville, at a sitting of the Council of State, specially convened for the consideration of a subject in which they were all interested. On the morning of the appointed day, the project had almost been frustrated by a curious accident. Condé, contrary to his custom, perhaps somewhat uneasy at the rumours which reached him, made an early call at the Palace, and suddenly entered the Cardinal's cabinet, while Lyonne, Under Secretary of State, was making out the order for his arrest. Mazarin, however, received his visitor with an unruffled mien, and having distracted his attention to indifferent subjects until Lyonne had shuffled away the danger-

ous document amongst some other papers, is said to have played off on his unsuspecting victim a practical joke, the sly malice of which was eminently characteristic. When the Prince was about to leave, the Cardinal, suddenly assuming a joyous air, as if he had just recollected something agreeable, mentioned that the police had tracked to an obscure lurking-place a principal agent in the late plot for his assassination. It was expected, Mazarin added, that as this man could make revelations of a character to criminate the Fronde leaders, a rescue would be attempted; it seemed advisable, therefore, that the Prince should sign an order for a body of troops to escort prisoners to the fortress of Vincennes. Condé, burning with still unslaked animosity against De Retz and Beaufort, gave the order with alacrity, and thus became the unconscious instrument of his own captivity.

In the afternoon the three brothers arrived together at the Palais Royal to attend the Council of State, while their mother was closeted with the Regent. These ladies had been for more than twenty years on a footing of intimate affection; and now, alarmed by the suspicions afloat, the old Princess had come to the Palace, expecting that if danger threatened her children, she would read some

indication of it in the demeanour of her old friend. But Anne of Austria, schooled in many trials, was a mistress of dissimulation. She entered with easy familiarity into a confidential conversation with the Princess, dismissing her with an affectionate adieu, only when the time was ripe for an act of vengeance that would crush her and her whole family. Condé had hardly entered the Council Chamber when Guitant, captain of the Regent's Guards, made his appearance. The Prince had a strong regard for the staunch old soldier, and, thinking that he came to solicit some favour, turned towards him with a gracious air; whereupon Guitant whispered the nature of his errand. Condé, amazed and indignant, cried out to his brothers, "We are arrested!" and demanded to see the Regent. But an interview being denied, he submitted with dignity to his fate. Conti wept bitterly, and Longueville's agitation deprived him of speech, and almost of motion. The prisoners were taken by a dark passage to the gardens of the Palace. "This," said Condé, suspiciously, "strongly savours of the States of Blois." "No, monseigneur," replied Guitant; "if that were the case I should not be concerned in it." At a private door, opening from the Gardens into the Rue Richelieu, one of the royal

carriages, surrounded by the escort Condé had ordered out, was in attendance. The faces of some of the soldiers, his old comrades in arms, were familiar to him, and, perhaps, with a view of testing their devotion to their favourite leader, he said, "This, my friends, is not the Battle of Lens." But the soldiers, though expressing in their countenances vivid emotions of grief and sympathy, were obedient to discipline, and the cavalcade started at a rapid pace for Vincennes. On the road the breaking down of the coach in the pitchy darkness of a January evening seemed to afford the prisoners a chance of escape, but it was found impossible to corrupt or elude the stern vigilance of Guitant. During the journey, Condé displayed a calm intrepidity which contrasted strongly with the abject bearing of his companions; and on arriving at Vincennes, finding that, through dread of awakening suspicion, no preparation had been made for his reception, he flung himself on the floor of his chamber and passed twelve hours in unbroken sleep. Conti and Longueville, shivering from fear or fever, watched through the dreary night in profound despair.

In Paris, on the report of their hero's arrest, a body of young noblemen, led by the Duke of Rohan and the Count of Boutteville, assailed the

Convent of Val de Grace in order to obtain possession of Mazarin's nieces, who resided there; and afterwards attempted to raise a popular insurrection by proclaiming that the Duke of Beaufort had been again incarcerated at Vincennes. But the Cardinal had provided for the safety of his young kinswomen by removing them to the Palais Royal; and De Retz promptly allayed the rising tumult in the streets by sending forth Beaufort to parade the town on horseback, decorated with his well-known white plume. When the real facts became known the public anger gave place to exultation. The streets rang with the sounds of rejoicing, and the sky was red with the glare of bonfires, courtier and citizen uniting with emulous enthusiasm to celebrate the downfall of that insolent despotism which had been the object of their common hatred and fear. Orleans, on recovering from the agony of terror into which the fierce determination with which the Regent wrung from him a scared consent to Condé's imprisonment, had thrown him, and being apprised of her success, whistled carelessly, and said, "The Regent has made a good haul of the net—she has captured a fox, a monkey, and a lion."

CHAPTER II.

THE bold and skilful stroke of the Government, in arresting Condé and his brothers, exposed it to two formidable dangers—a hostile decree of the Parliament of Paris in vindication of the violated Declaration of October; and an armed revolt of the numerous and powerful adherents of the imprisoned Princes throughout the provinces. From the former peril it was saved by its alliance with the Coadjutor. · The partizans of the Court and of the Fronde cordially uniting their forces, the High Court sanctioned, by an immense majority, the illegal proceeding of the Regent as an exceptional act, imperatively demanded by the public welfare. Almost alone, the First President Molé, whose clear, firm mind, unshaken by gusts of passions and unwarped by the sophistries of statecraft, remained ever true to the principles of justice, stood forth as the champion of the con-

stitution, of which he was the principal author. But his voice was drowned in the tumult of popular delirium, and he was only able to offer by his sad and stern aspect, among the joyous crowds that thronged the Palais Royal, a mute protest against the abuse of the royal prerogative. It is in France especially that the French proverb is true, "Nothing succeeds like success."

The Government was not equally fortunate in its attempts to avert a civil war, by seizing the persons of Condé's leading adherents then assembled in Paris. A feeling of shame, mingled perhaps with contempt, restrained the Regent and her minister from dealing harshly with the two Princesses of Condé, the Dowager, Anne of Austria's old and tried friend, the younger, niece of Mazarin's great benefactor. The sorrowing ladies were allowed to retire with the little Duke of Enghien to Chantilly. But every precaution which policy and vengeance suggested was used to insure the capture of Madame de Longueville and the military chiefs. All of them, however, having timely intimation of their danger, contrived to elude pursuit. Bouillon and his brother Turenne, disguising themselves as boatmen, escaped down the Seine in the darkness of the night. The Duke repaired to his estates in Auvergne. Turenne took

refuge in Condé's frontier town of Stenay, where he raised the standard of revolt in the name of the imprisoned Princes. The Count of Boutteville, a young cadet of the House of Montmorenci, deformed in person and of depraved life, but already exhibiting promise of the military genius which long afterwards made all Europe ring with the renown of the Marshal Duke of Luxembourg, fled to Burgundy, and called that province to arms. The Regent was particularly eager to secure the person of Madame de Longueville, whose insolent rivalry during the siege of Paris, and the subsequent dictatorship of Condé, had provoked her deepest resentment. Upon the arrest of her husband and her brothers, the Duchess received a message commanding her instant attendance at the Palais Royal. She feigned compliance, and with the assistance of her friend, the Princess Palatine, found a temporary retreat at a mean house in the suburbs. In the night the Prince of Marsillac carried her off into Normandy, of which province Longueville was governor. But Condé's imprisonment was a blow so sudden and unexpected, that it left his party completely paralyzed; and before the scattered leaders had time to organize their forces, or frame any connected scheme of resistance, the rapid and vigorous

measures of the Government completed their discomfiture.

The periods of internal convulsion which chequer the progress of even the most prosperous nations, resemble those bleak and dismal wastes that occasionally sadden the traveller's eye amidst a rich expanse of blooming landscapes. History reads us no more emphatic lesson, than that stable institutions are absolutely essential to the well-being of a State. It repeats in every age its mournful warning, that anarchy is a scourge armed with every variety of evil, moral, intellectual and physical; destroying the legitimate supremacy of religion and of reason; enthroning the basest passions on the eternal seat of justice; rending the most sacred and tender bonds of social life; extinguishing letters, arts, and sciences in blood and tears; sowing the dragon's teeth of human misery, wherever its reign extends. But in the compulsory union, yet ceaseless conflict, of antagonistic elements, which is the universal law of life, in the mysterious and often apparent, inconsistent chain of cause and effect, in which human events are linked, evil is ever the companion and the occasion of good. When the fountains of the great deep of human intelligence, long sealed in restless slumber, are

breaking up, and society is riven by the throes of some momentous revolution, from the strife of warring forces is born genius, whose high mission is to construct and to redeem; to mould the chaos into new forms of social life; to educe from disorder new systems of polity. Even when anarchy is merely a war of selfish instincts, the seething up through the shattered crust of society of the corruption that ferments at its heart, it has always features that reclaim it from utter hideousness. In the life of a polished and well-ordered community, evil and good are rarely brought into strong contrast. Under its placid surface heroic virtue, as well as colossal vice, lies hidden and unsuspected. But the troubles that stimulate into portentous activity the basest passions of human nature, also afford an incitement and a field to its noblest qualities. Herbs of healing power flourish by the deadliest plants. Sweet flowers bloom, and living rills gush forth in the most savage desert. And from amidst the crimes and miseries of mankind spring up great deeds and immortal virtues, to shed light and beauty and consolation; divine seeds that blossom into golden harvests long after the memory of the desolate seed time has passed away. Thus the spirit of chivalry, the glory of mediæval Europe, and the soul of

Christian heroism, which flung such a pure and softening radiance over the grim terrors of feudal barbarism, still survives, to inform, however imperfectly, the gross materialism of modern civilization.

This tendency of calamitous times, to develop latent strength and goodness of character, finds its most striking manifestations in the finer nature of woman. Every country has furnished examples of women, often of fragile frame and shrinking delicacy, cradled in the lap of refined luxury, so that even the breezes of summer seemed to visit their cheeks too roughly, who kindled by the fire and endued with the sublime power of some lofty purpose, have displayed a patient courage, a fertility of resource, even a capacity of physical endurance that shame the strength and intellect of man; who have lived and died marvels and mysteries to his grosser sympathies. The annals of no other land are so rich in records of feminine worth, so illumined by the splendour of feminine achievements as those of France. And even the sordid passions and ignoble contentions of the Fronde produced heroines whose exploits lend to that barren struggle an enduring interest.

The escape of Condé's leading adherents from Paris only stimulated the Regent to more vigorous

efforts to crush the scattered forces of insurrection before they gathered to a head. Troops were instantly despatched to reduce the provinces of which the imprisoned princes had been governors. The towns of Champagne and Burgundy opened their gates without resistance to the Duke of Vendôme, now High Admiral of France and Governor of Burgundy, and propped in his new fortunes by the betrothal of his son, Mercœur, to Olympia Mancini. Only the fortress of Bellegarde, into which the Count of Boutteville had thrown himself with a body of gentlemen, defied the royal arms in the eastern part of the kingdom. The province of Berri accepted its new governor, the Count of St. Aignan, with equal facility, the cause of Condé being upheld there only in the almost impregnable castle of Montrond.

In the meantime, Anne of Austria, with all the energy which offended authority and personal resentment could call forth in an imperious nature, had pursued Madame de Longueville into Normandy. Rendered insensible to fatigue or privation by the ardour of her feelings, she passed almost the whole of each day on horseback. Mazarin and the Court, unable to keep pace with her movements, followed more leisurely in the rear. Rouen and other important towns surren-

dered to her first summons, and Madame de Longueville, hunted from place to place, sought shelter at Havre from the Duchess of Richelieu. But this artful lady, in whom gratitude was evidently a lively expectation of future benefits, seizing the opportunity of purchasing by her present services the recognition of her marriage by the Regent, repulsed her unfortunate friend from the gates, and even made a merit of allowing her to continue her flight. Marsillac had departed some time before to raise his vassals in Poitou, and the forlorn fugitive threw herself into the crag-built castle of Dieppe. This last refuge also failed her. On the approach of the royal forces, the Governor declared his inability to hold out the place, and the citizens of Dieppe were deaf to her eloquent appeals to them to arm in its defence. It was a dark and tempestuous night, wild even beyond the terrible experience of that iron-bound coast. The storm howled dismally around the mist-clad turrets of the castle, and the sea, rolling in mountainous billows, broke in thunder at its base. One of two courses was open to the Duchess; either to brave the fury of the elements, or to throw herself on the mercy of the Regent. She did not for a moment hesitate in her choice. Having first made a general confession to a priest,

she left the castle by a private outlet, and proceeded on foot along the coast, accompanied by a few attendants, to a small port about two leagues distant, where a foreign vessel, in which she had secured a passage, lay at anchor. The little party toiled along their broken way, through the pitchy darkness which clothed in deeper horror the terrors that encompassed them. They were beaten by the fierce tempest and by the drifting spray, and were guided only by the hoarse roar of the raging surf, and the forked lightnings which, flashing through the gloom, lit up into fitful splendour the wild sublimity of the scene. On reaching the harbour they found two small boats, which had been hired to take them to the ship. But even the hardiest sailors of the coast, daunted by the perilous aspect of the sea, refused to venture out. The entreaties of the Duchess and the promise of a large reward at length prevailed. One of the crew carried her in his arms through the surf, and placed her in a boat. But she was almost instantly dashed from it by the rush of waters, and it was at the imminent risk of their own lives that the gentlemen of her suite, plunging into the foam, rescued her, when half-drowned, from the breakers. On recovering consciousness she was eager to renew the attempt, but all her

eloquence and liberality failed to induce the seamen to consent. The following day she concealed herself, and in the night, the wind having lulled, was just putting off from the shore, when one of her friends galloped up with information that the captain of the vessel, in which she was about to embark, had taken an enormous bribe from Cardinal Mazarin to deliver her up. After this narrow escape, she wandered along the sea shore for fifteen days, disguised in male attire and beset by dangers and privations. She succeeded at last in obtaining a passage under a feigned name, which belied her sex, from Havre to Holland in an English ship. From Holland she proceeded to Stenay, where there is reason to fear she soon forgot her vows of penitence in the society of Viscount Turenne.

Turenne has been pronounced by the highest judges one of the most consummate masters of the art of war that any age or country has produced. His qualifications for command were in a manner hereditary. His maternal uncle, Prince Maurice of Nassau, had been endowed by nature with military genius still more splendid than his own; his father had been one of the most distinguished captains of Henry IV. The interest of his powerful family opened to him, at an

unusually early age, opportunities of displaying the talents which rendered him illustrious. Whether from deficiency of knowledge or of enterprise, the greatness of the difficulties, or the blind caprice of fortune, his first campaigns were rarely successful. At the battle of Mariendal he suffered the greatest disgrace that can befal a general, in allowing his army to be surprised, and almost annihilated by Count Mercy and John of Werth. But subsequent study and experience so developed and matured his extraordinary natural ability, as to advance him in the judgment of Napoleon to the very foremost place among modern strategists. It was peculiar to him of famous commanders, that years lent fire to his temperament while perfecting his skill. As he grew older he grew more enterprising, and his latest operations were at once the most faultless and the most brilliant. His was not the genius of Condé, which at its very first dawning burst forth into dazzling effulgence. Its rising was obscured by shadows, but as it slowly climbed its starry pathway the mantling vapours were dissipated by its expanding radiance, leaving it to set in the fulness of glory. Condé's genius, fervid and daring, flashed out with the light of inspiration in the tumult of battle, confounding and destroying

his foes by some prodigy of tactics at the very moment when their triumph seemed assured. The genius of Turenne displayed its patient energy and its unbounded resources to most advantage amidst the discouragement and the disorganization of defeat. A single victory which, indeed, rather deserves the name of a conquest, placed the young hero of Rocroi upon the pinnacle of fame. His great rival reached the same proud eminence by a slow and toilsome, but not less certain progress. Turenne was of middle stature, powerfully and rather clumsily built, and adorned with few of the graces of a Court. His features, strongly marked, even to harshness, wore a habitual expression of melancholy, which his thick and contracted eye-brows almost deepened into gloom. His ordinary demeanour betrayed a want of ease and self-confidence, which appeared to indicate irresolution of character. But though modest almost to a fault, and constitutionally cautious, no man in trying emergencies arrived more rapidly at a decision, or adhered to it more tenaciously. He was cheerful, gentle, sincere; simple in his tastes, generous and hospitable; a warm friend and a placable enemy. His capacity for government, although less exercised, was not inferior to his capacity for war. He had been

brought up in the Huguenot faith, to which his family had given some of its bravest champions. During the earlier part of his career, whilst a member of the brilliant but profligate military party, of which Condé was the hero and chief, he did not entirely escape the taint of fashionable vices. In later life, religion reckoned him amongst her most fervent votaries, Catholicity amongst her most illustrious converts. In truth, he became one of the choicest specimens of a great and good man, of genius purified and exalted by virtue.

The beautiful and ambitious Duchess of Bouillon had been prevented from being the companion of her husband's flight by an advanced state of pregnancy. The Regent harshly ordered her to be arrested on the day, and almost at the hour when she was confined in child-birth. The only solace vouchsafed to her, in the languor of illness and the solitude of a rigorous constraint, was an occasional visit from a daughter who had been separated from her, a child about nine years old. One evening, as the little girl was leaving her mother's chamber, a sentinel preceding her with a torch to light the way through the dim ante-rooms, the Duchess crouching down followed close behind, and contrived to secrete herself in a cellar. From this dismal asylum she was dragged

through an air-hole by her maids. Her friends, without losing a moment, provided her with the means of escape from Paris; and she was on the point of setting out for Auvergne, when word was brought to her that her daughter had been stricken with the small-pox. No personal consideration could sever the tender mother from the couch of her suffering child. The agents of Government, with the keen instincts of their calling, found the Duchess watching by her daughter's pillow, and flung her into the Bastille.

But the highest example of feminine worth was afforded by the young Princess of Condé, who, called forth by the misfortunes of her husband from comparative obscurity and contempt to play a great part on the political stage, became, through native force and beauty of her character, the wonder and the admiration of the age. Her life, since her inauspicious nuptials, had been passed in meek endurance of unprovoked wrongs. After Richelieu's death, Condé's aversion to the child who had been forced upon him as a bride, countenanced by the open disdain of his proud family, manifested itself in studied neglect. For the contemptuous dislike of her husband, which neither her love, her gentle virtues, nor her patient submission had power to soften, and the

indignities heaped upon her by his haughty kindred, the young Princess found but a poor recompense in the dreary isolation of a barren greatness, shorn of honour and uncheered by sympathy. But hers was one of those noble natures which great trials, instead of crushing, strengthen and purify. At a time when the manners of the majority of her sex in Paris might be truly described as chartered libertinism, and notwithstanding conjugal wrongs sufficient to irritate the most forbearing of women, her character was unsullied by the faintest breath of slander. Indeed, her chastity was the theme of general and, most frequently, derisive comment. But even the few who appreciated the modest virtues that bloomed on the monotonous surface of her joyless life, never suspected the deep rich mine that lay concealed beneath, waiting for the rude hand of calamity to lay bare its treasures.

Around the Princesses at Chantilly there assembled a little court of noble ladies, the most distinguished of whom was Angelique de Montmorenci, the beautiful Duchess of Chatillon. Some years before, Condé, then at the zenith of his fame, had loved Angelique passionately. The young Duke of Chatillon, who, inflamed with as deep and a more legitimate affection, was a suitor

for her hand, viewed with alarm the advances of such a formidable competitor. He knew but of one way to disarm the rivalry that menaced his happiness, which was to reveal his own attachment in confidence to the Prince. Condé, with a generosity rare at that profligate period, sacrificed his passion to friendship. He not only discontinued his attentions, but he aided his rival to carry off the prize, and afterwards reconciled the lady's family, who were his own maternal relatives, to the marriage. After Chatillon's death, at the battle of Charenton, Condé renewed his suit with the Duchess. It was coldly received. But when reverses had darkened the proud fortunes of the hero, when the eagle was caged in the donjon of Vincennes, Angelique, touched with pity, devoted herself to solace his mother's grief and to promote his liberation.

The party at Chantilly was soon joined by the able and faithful Lenet. Communications were then opened with the partizans of the Princes throughout the country, and with independent members of the Parliament of Paris who resented the infraction of the Declaration of October as a fatal blow to public liberty. Anne of Austria had hastened from Normandy, with her son and Cardinal Mazarin, to press the siege of Bellegarde,

where the Count of Boutteville made a stout defence. The restoration of the Marquis of Chateauneuf to his old place of Keeper of the Seals, the grant of the reversion of the post of High Admiral to the Duke of Beaufort, and the flatteries and promises lavished on the Coadjutor, secured for the present the allegiance of the Fronde and the tranquillity of Paris. But the absence of the Regent and her Minister from the centre of Government, allowed opportunities of political intrigue, which the indefatigable Lenet strove to turn to account. The young Princess at first had little weight in the councils at Chantilly. She was regarded as an intruder into the family of Bourbon, as a feeble girl without capacity or high instincts to qualify her for the direction of State affairs. Lenet was the first to discern glimmerings of a lofty spirit and superior talents through the veil of her timid reserve. His schemes were paralyzed by the irresolution and avarice of the Dowager Princess, whose courage was broken, and whose natural failings were morbidly developed by age and misfortune. Foreseeing that Claire, especially if accompanied by her son, would play a much more important part in a civil war, he constantly lent her encouragement and support.

Plotting, however, was not the sole occupation of the fair conspirators at Chantilly. Golden threads of pleasure were interwoven in the sombre tissue of intrigue. The Chateau, crowning scenery of bewitching beauty, surrounded by gardens laid out with exquisite taste, and graced by the presence of young and lovely women, became the secret resort of gallant gentlemen from all parts of the kingdom. The Dowager Princess, with the majestic remains of that peerless beauty which had so nearly set all Europe in a flame, still preserved undiminished a sparkling wit, and the charm of conversational powers not less remarkable than her beauty. Many an amusing anecdote of her royal lover, relieving gloomier recollections of the terrible Richelieu, was now drunk in from her lips by a brilliant circle of delighted listeners. In the fervid heat of noon, ladies and cavaliers dispersed themselves through the delicious shades of embowering foliage, weaving the bright fancies of youth and passion, as they lounged in luxurious indolence in perfumed arbours, which the faint breath of orange trees, and the cool murmurs of gleaming fountains made paradises for a Sybarite. At eventide, when a gentle breeze awaking fanned the earth with its fragrant wings, they strolled in laughing groups by the borders of the lake. The

vivid flash of wit, the genial play of humour, the gorgeous dreams of fancy, the light jest, the stinging epigram, the soft magic of love, eloquent in bright smiles and chivalrous homage, threw a sunshine over the cares of faction, and lent a deeper spell to that enchanting landscape, which spread away, radiant and ever various, beneath the stately promenoirs of Chantilly.

This chequered life of conspiracy and pleasure was brought somewhat abruptly to a close. Secret reports from Paris informed the Regent, then at Dijon, that Chantilly had become a focus of rebellion. She despatched a gentleman of the King's household, named De Vouldy, to arrest the Princesses, and to escort the younger to Chateauroux, a stern and isolated old castle, belonging to Condé, in Berri. The sudden occupation of the neighbouring villages by detachments of the royal troops gave the fair offenders at Chantilly warning of their danger, and, with the assistance of Lenet, they concerted an ingenious plan of operations to defeat the intentions of the Regent.

The Dowager Princess, feigning severe illness, retired to her bed. Claire, who, when the alarm was given, was confined to her's by fever, arose, and concealed herself with the little Duke of Enghien. Her place was taken by Miss Gerbier,

a young English lady of her household, whose resemblance to her mistress was sufficient to deceive a not very intrusive observer, in the gloom of a sick chamber. A gardener's son was dressed to represent the Duke of Enghien. De Vouldy, on producing the Regent's warrant, was introduced with the most anxious precautions into the bed-chambers of the Princesses, and so well did the pretended invalids perform their parts that he was thoroughly deceived. He naturally shrank from unnecessary harshness towards prisoners whose rank, sex, and condition of health, claimed respectful forbearance. Contenting himself with making arrangements to visit them in person at short intervals, he left them in comparative freedom. Towards midnight, Claire, accompanied by her son, disguised as a girl, and by a few ladies, stole from the chateau. At the outskirts of the forest the party found a capacious coach and six, of sober colour, which had been stationed there to receive them by the care of Lenet. They entered at once, and set off for the Castle of Montrond, travelling as the family of Madame de Tourville, the Princess's first Lady of Honour. Their safety was watched over by a mounted escort of gentlemen, who, in order to avoid observation, travelled in pairs, each detach-

ment stopping at a different inn, and suppressing all recognition of the others. On reaching Paris a change of horses was obtained from the Hotel de Condé, and the fugitives continued their journey southwards, halting only at the houses of assured friends, when rest and food were absolutely necessary. They crossed the Loire at a ferry opposite the chateau of the Duke of Sully, grandson of the great minister, who had passed more than forty years in this retreat, having survived Cardinal Richelieu. As Claire waited on the bank for the coach to be ferried over, sitting, in order to disarm suspicion, on Lenet's knee, she was recognised by a servant from the chateau. The Duke courteously offered her hospitality and succour, but dreading the risk of delay, she pressed forward, and, after an exhausting journey of three days and nights, reached Montrond in safety.

The Castle of Montrond crowned the summit of a precipitous cliff which arose in the angle formed by the junction of the rivers Cher and Marmaude. Towering high from the centre of an extensive plain, it commanded the little town of St. Amand, which lay nestling at its feet, and one of the most beautiful and fruitful regions of France. Nature and art had combined to render

the place almost impregnable. Three sides of the cliff, furrowed by chasms, were washed by a deep and rapid current. The fourth side was girdled by three lines of strong fortifications, the outermost of which could only be approached by a single narrow pathway hewn in the rock. An abundant spring of pure water gushed forth on the summit, fertilizing a considerable extent of pasturage. It was a stronghold in which a small garrison, well supplied with ammunition and provisions, might have defied with impunity a powerful army. But the Princess found it on her arrival so destitute of defenders and of the means of defence, that, notwithstanding its strength, it afforded but an insecure refuge from the anger of the Regent.

Meanwhile the comedy of Chantilly was successfully played out. Every day De Vouldy visited his prisoners, politely assured himself of their safety, and awaited their convalescence in complete security. Rumours of the flight of the younger Princess having reached Mazarin, a second messenger was despatched to Chantilly from the Court. But De Vouldy laughed to scorn the uneasiness of the Government. The young lady, he averred, was never longer than a few hours out of his sight. His eyes were only

opened to the deception that had been practised on him, when the Dowager Princess, having allowed sufficient time to elapse for her daughter-in-law's journey, escaped by night to Paris, attended by Madame de Chatillon.

The Chambers having adjourned for vacation, the old Princess concealed herself for ten days in the house of a friendly Councillor of Requests. On the morning of the re-assembling of the Parliament she went with Madame de Chatillon to the Palace of Justice, holding in her hand a petition to the High Court that the article against arbitrary arrests in the Declaration of October, 1648, might be enforced. Standing at the outer door, for a long time she vainly solicited each member as he came in to advocate her cause. At length a patriotic magistrate, named Deslande Payen, said he should not be prevented by fear from doing his duty, and took charge of the petition. At the instance of the First President Molé, a day was appointed for its consideration, and Madame de Condé was assigned a temporary residence under the protection of the Court.

The Palais Royal and the Fronde were still in the first transports of their strange alliance, and the coalition employed every art and strained every effort to defeat the motion. The Duke of Orleans,

who represented the Crown, during the Regent's absence in Burgundy, went to the Palace of Justice, accompanied by De Retz and Beaufort, to cast the weight of his personal influence into the scale of authority. They found the old Princess awaiting their arrival in the entrance hall. Throwing herself at their feet, with tearful supplications, she implored their compassion. Orleans escaped from her in haste, muttering some incoherent excuses; Beaufort could not utter a word; "and as for me," says De Retz, "I almost died of shame." Deslande Payen supported the prayer of his client with ability and courage. The magistrates found themselves in a position of peculiar embarrassment. They had gone to all lengths, even so far as to plunge the kingdom into civil war, in defence of the principle of the liberty of the subject invoked by their suppliant. To suffer this principle, when the ink of the treaty solemnly affirming it was scarcely dry, to be openly violated without even a protest, was to pass the most severe condemnation on themselves. They must stand convicted before all France either of unjustifiable rebellion or of a servile betrayal of the national interests. But the odious despotism of Condé was still fresh in every memory—still filled every heart with hatred and

with fear. And strong personal and party animosities overbore, in the minds of the majority, higher considerations of patriotism and justice. De Retz and his satellites inveighed against the insolent tyranny of the great enemy of popular rights. The Duke of Orleans, in an artful speech of affected moderation, deplored the necessities of the time which compelled him to oppose the immediate liberation of his cousins, as being fraught with danger to the State. To clinch his arguments, he produced an intercepted copy of a treaty, which Madame de Longueville and Turenne had concluded with the Spaniards. The sight of this treasonable document quieted the conscience of the Assembly, by seeming to afford the justification which it felt that the course it was resolved to follow needed. The petition was rejected by a large majority. The old Princess, however, chiefly through the interposition of Molé, was permitted by the Regent to retire to the country seat of the Duchess of Chatillon. The proud spirit that had borne her up amidst the misfortunes of her married life, amidst the ruin of her illustrious house, when her husband seemed hopelessly estranged from her, when her gallant and accomplished brother, the last Duke of Montmorenci, perished on the scaffold, sank under the calamities that

overwhelmed her children. Crushed by a weight of grief and despair, which all the tender solicitude of Madame de Chatillon was unable to lighten, she soon found refuge from her sufferings in the grave.

While these events were passing in Paris, the younger Princess, assisted by the able and energetic Lenet, was striving against almost insuperable difficulties to put Montrond in a state of defence. The Castle was destitute of resources of every kind, and Claire soon learned that misfortune has a gorgon aspect which turns the hearts of friends into stone. Her father, the old Marshal Brezé, famous throughout the kingdom for his eccentric and somewhat cynical habits, had died in the early part of the year. On his death-bed he exacted an oath from his principal officer, Dumont by name, to hold the strong town of Saumur, of which he had long been Governor, in the interest of his daughter. Claire's first step on reaching Montrond was to communicate with Dumont and with the Prince of Marsillac, who had just succeeded to his patrimonial title of Duke of la Rochefoucault. The Duke assembled all his retainers, upon the pretext of celebrating his father's obsequies, and marched towards Saumur. But news meeting him on the way that Dumont,

seduced by Mazarin's bribes, had betrayed his trust, he was obliged to disband his forces, and retire to the Chateau of Verteuil. The old Princess of Condé, whose many admirable qualities were sullied by the vice of avarice, distracted by anguish and terror, refused to unlock her hoards. The powerful connexions of Condé and Brezé, believing the cause of the imprisoned Princes hopeless, hastened to make their peace with the Regent, and in reply to their young kinswoman's solicitations for succour, counselled submission. She could see from the battlements, the new Governor of Berri, the Count of St. Aignan, a creature of Mazarin, prowling around the Castle with a strong body of horsemen, as if meditating hostilities. After a while, intelligence arrived of the surrender of Bellegarde, the last remaining possession of her husband in Burgundy. The condition of her affairs seemed utterly desperate even to her staunchest supporters. But she bore bravely up against disaster and defection. "Her trust," she said, "was in God, the protector of innocence."

Brightening prospects gradually justified the young Princess's confidence. Sums of money, raised by the sale or on the security of her father's effects, were secretly expended in

procuring munitions of war. Many of the late defenders of Bellegarde stole across the country, and threw themselves into Montrond. The neighbouring gentry sent in supplies of provisions under cover of the night. And what was of the greatest moment, the Regent and Mazarin, having their hands full in other quarters, and despising her as an adversary, allowed themselves to listen to her excuses, conveyed in a letter full of pathos and submission, which deprecated Anne of Austria's anger, and the hostile proceedings of St. Aignan. Accepting her plea that she had substantially obeyed the royal mandate in retiring to Berri, the Government imprudently instructed St. Aignan to suffer her to remain unmolested during her good behaviour. It soon had reason bitterly to repent its error. The gentry of Berri, who now flocked openly to pay her their respects, captivated by the natural charm of her manners and conversation, became enthusiastic in her cause. Every day noble volunteers arrived from all parts of France to swell the garrison of Montrond. In order not to arouse suspicion, most of these were quietly quartered in the village of St. Amand, or distributed through the neighbouring chateaux. Finally the Dukes of Bouillon and La Rochefoucault sent her word that they had concerted a

plan of operations, and were ready to take the field at the head of their vassals, if she would join them with her son.

It was resolved in the Princess's Council, of which the leading members were Lenet and Count Coligni, that she should embrace without delay the proposal of the Dukes. A great hunting party was proclaimed, and upon the pretext of sport, the partizans of Condé, in Berri, were summoned to meet at Montrond. When the guests had all assembled in the great hall of the castle, the gates were locked, and Claire entered the apartment, leading the little Duke of Enghien by the hand. Nature had endowed her with few of the external attributes with which fancy loves to adorn a heroine. Her figure, though graceful and well-proportioned, was diminutive; her features, pleasing and intelligent rather than striking, notwithstanding the soft fire of her eyes, were deficient in regularity; her manners on ordinary occasions were remarkably gentle and unobtrusive. But her insignificant frame was informed by a noble spirit which, when stirred by deep emotion, lit up her countenance into singular beauty, and touched her tongue with irresistible eloquence. And now when, pale and weeping, but with the light of heroic courage flashing through her

tears, she recounted in pathetic language the woes and wrongs of her husband and her son, and told her moved listeners that she was about to confide to the keeping of their honour the Castle of Montrond, the wreck of the fortunes of a Prince, but yesterday the strength and glory of France, to-day the impotent victim of a perfidious foreigner, the assembled warriors, electrified by her words, sprang to their feet as one man, and swore to die in its defence.

Tearing herself away with difficulty from a scene of frantic enthusiasm, Claire, attended by Lenet, Coligni, and a small train, left Montrond on the night of the 8th of May, and started upon her journey. She rode on a pillion behind Coligni, who, to disarm suspicion, gave out at each halting-place on the route that she was a rich heiress whom he was carrying off into the wilds of Auvergne. This pretext sufficed in that adventurous age to obtain for him general sympathy and assistance. They crossed the Cher and afterwards the Allier, eluding the rapid pursuit of St. Aignan, climbed by rocky paths the steep mountains of Chantal, and on the 14th of May reached the camp which the Dukes had pitched near the village of Anglar. As the Princess rode along the lines of burnished steel and tossing plumes, drawn up to

receive her, there arose in a mighty shout, a war-cry which shortly afterwards re-echoed throughout France, "Long live the Princes and down with Mazarin." She was conducted in a species of triumphal procession to Bouillon's ancestral seat, the Chateau of Turenne.

The Duke entertained his fair guest with princely hospitality. He accorded her sovereign honours. Fêtes, balls, masquerades, crowned the day with pleasure and dethroned the night. But, with the chief personages, revelry was but the mask of political intrigue, furnishing occasions for drawing together the neighbouring gentry. Whilst apparently engrossed by festivity the Princess and the Dukes laboured incessantly in secret council to organize a formidable revolt. They sought to enlist the support of the great Huguenot connexion of the south-west, which, until shattered by the blows of Richelieu, had often successfully defied the whole power of the Crown. But their most anxious care was to induce the Parliament and citizens of Bordeaux actively to espouse the cause of the Princes. In order to understand this solicitude, it is only necessary to keep in view the political condition of the state. At that period of selfish turbulence, the countenance of one of the High Courts of

Justice was essential to the success of an insurrection. These great magisterial bodies were the sole barriers that protected the mass of the population from the despotism of the Crown, and in their public conduct might be recognised something of the spirit and dignity of the laws of which they were interpreters and guardians. Unlike the factious nobles who took advantage of the disorders of the kingdom to eke out their slender revenues by rapine, who obeyed only the ever varying impulses of individual cupidity or caprice, the Parliaments were ever consistently united in the defence of their common privileges, and frequently joined in vindicating public liberty and national interests. The honourable contrast which their fidelity to their order and their patriotism afforded to the political profligacy of the nobility, and their origin among the great unprivileged class, secured to them the attachment and veneration of the people. Wealthy burghers, who paid but a grumbling obedience to a Royal Edict, donned helmet and loosed purse-string with alacrity at the appeal of a Parliament. An insurrection inaugurated with such auspices lost in the popular eye the darker hues of rebellion, and was, in a manner, hallowed by the sanction of public justice.

The house of Condé and the city of Bordeaux were bound together by hereditary ties of protection and gratitude. The captive Prince himself had laid the citizens under obligations. They viewed his downfall with regret, and were moved by a generous compassion for his wife and son. Domestic grievances of their own strengthened this feeling of sympathy. They groaned under the insolent exactions of the Duke of Epernon, a rapacious and profligate nobleman, whom, in opposition to their repeated remonstrances, Mazarin upheld in his mis-government of Aquetaine on account of the suit of his son, the Duke of Candale, for the Countess of Martinozzi, the Cardinal's beautiful niece. Thus, at this critical juncture, the second city of the kingdom, already biassed in her favour by ancient associations and personal attachment, was goaded by oppression to take up arms in the Princess's cause.

Claire and her council, on receiving certain intelligence of the favourable sentiments of the citizens of Bordeaux, determined to assemble all their forces without delay and march upon the city. This resolution was executed with celerity and vigour. Messages flew through the adjacent provinces summoning the partizans of the im-

prisoned Princes to assemble in arms, and the call was promptly obeyed. From the rugged mountains of Auvergne; from the golden plains of Languedoc, consecrated to poetry and love; from the vine-clad slopes of Gascony, gallant nobles poured to the common rendezvous, girt with numerous and warlike vassals, all wearing over their armour scarves of "Isabelle." This badge of the insurgents derived its origin and its name from an incident sufficiently ludicrous in itself, and curious, as being perhaps the last historical illustration of one of the customs of more pious times. In the year 1601, the Archduchess Isabella, Sovereign of the Netherlands, besieged Ostend, which had revolted from the Spanish rule, with a powerful army. The cannon of the Spaniards soon battered down the defences of the town; yawning breaches invited an assault; and the Archduchess, in the fervour of her enthusiasm and to stimulate her troops, rashly vowed that she would not change her linen till the place had fallen. She found to her misfortune that she had sadly under-rated the stubborn valour of the Flemings. The garrison, with deplorable want of consideration, made a most obstinate resistance. Successive storming parties were repulsed with prodigious slaughter.

The shattered ramparts, manned by determined patriotism, were proof against all the resources of military science and skill, exhausted by the compassionate gallantry of the most chivalrous and veteran army of Europe. The siege was turned into a blockade, and three long years had passed away before the patient vigilance of the besiegers famished the citizens into submission. Isabella, being a devout Catholic, kept her vow, at a sad sacrifice of personal comfort, and of the lustre of her linen. As may be imagined, her ladies were plunged into profound despair. They anxiously sought the most appropriate means of testifying their sympathy. Even courtly flattery, even Spanish loyalty shrank from the inconveniences of a strict imitation. But they suggested an expedient which afforded at once a touching and an unobjectionable expression of grief, which invested the fair mourners with all the interest, without involving any of the misery of martyrdom. All the ladies of the Flemish Court had their linen dyed a pale yellow. This jaundiced tint became the rage, the magic of fashion gave it beauty, its origin gave it a name, and Condé raised it to political significance, by adopting it as his particular colour.

At the head of a small but well-appointed army

the Princess rapidly descended the Dordogne. The Duke of Epernon sent his brother, the Chevalier de la Valette, with a strong force to oppose her, and a battle was fought near the village of Montclar. The Royalists were routed and driven from the field, leaving their standards, baggage, and military chest in the hands of the insurgents. The victorious troops continued their march to the famous chateau of Courtras, which had been inherited by the Princess on the death of her brother, the Duke of Brezé. Here it was determined to await fresh advices from Bordeaux. Summer now rejoiced in the exquisite freshness of its early bloom. The country around the chateau, the scene of the defeat of the Duke of Joyeuse by Henry of Navarre, was crowned with majestic woods, which opened in long shadowy vistas upon an enchanting variety of landscapes, resplendent with the glowing hues of the South: Mountains now stern and bare, now waving with verdure; gently swelling slopes clothed with vineyards and olive-groves; golden valleys through which the tributaries of the Dordogne wandered like veins of silver, grouped in ever-changing forms of beauty, charmed the eye. In this region of delight war smoothed his rugged front, and laid aside all his ferocity. The Duke of Bouil-

lon, violently smitten by the attractions of Miss Gerbier, who had contrived to rejoin her mistress, set an example of gallantry which gave a tone to the whole army. The sweet forest glades, upon whose flower-enamelled sward Titania might have loved to gambol with her fairy court, resounded with the mirth of less ethereal revellers; and occasionally some Orlando might be seen carving the memorials of his passion on the venerable trees, the mangled witnesses of his raptures or despair.

Tidings of an unfavourable character quickly terminated this brief season of dalliance. The Parliament of Paris, on receiving intelligence of the outbreak of civil war, had proclaimed Bouillon and La Rochefoucault public enemies. The Dukes of la Force, St. Simon, Tremouille, and other influential Huguenots, upon whose co-operation the insurgents had counted, refused to move, or declared for the Government. Lavie, Advocate-General of the Parliament of Bordeaux, had been sent down from the Court to keep the city to its allegiance, and was vigorously supported by the municipal authorities. An adverse reaction swayed the Parliament. This body had been willing to harbour and defend persecuted fugitives, the wife and son of their benefactor. But it hesitated to incur the manifold perils which it

foresaw must result from admitting into the city a victorious Princess, surrounded by a devoted army, commanded by turbulent and unscrupulous noblemen who had been declared traitors by the highest judicial authority of the kingdom. The mass of the citizens, however, filled with unreasoning hatred of Epernon and Mazarin, did not share the wise apprehensions of the magistrates. But their leaders found it necessary to temporise. Messages from her principal adherents urged the Princess to enter Bordeaux without delay, unattended by the Dukes or by any armed escort. Responding to these invitations, she crossed the Garonne in an open boat, accompanied only by her son and her ladies. When she reached the port the guns of several hundred vessels thundered forth their welcome. The whole population of the city poured forth to receive her, and bore her in triumph along streets spanned by festive arches, gay with the streaming banners of many nations, and strewn with flowers, to a palace which had been prepared for her residence.

Early on the following morning, Claire, attended by a vast crowd, went to the House of Parliament and petitioned the assembled magistrates to espouse her cause. The debate on her petition was stormy and protracted. But the tide of opinion

was flowing strongly in favour of a neutral policy, when the Princess rushed into the Chamber, leading her little son by the hand, and beautiful in the sublime agony of maternal woe. She was received with deep respect, and at once accorded a hearing. The grief and love of a mother inspired her language. She said she had brought her son to the Parliament of Bordeaux a suppliant for justice and for protection against Mazarin. He alone of his house was at liberty; he was only seven years of age; his illustrious father was in irons; his ancestors had been their protectors; would they not have compassion on his tender innocence which represented so much glory and so many misfortunes! Here emotion choked her voice, and the little Prince, casting himself upon his knee, exclaimed, "Be a father to me, gentlemen, for Cardinal Mazarin has deprived me of mine." An appeal so touching would have melted more flinty hearts than those which beat in the bosoms of the Gascons. Many of the magistrates wept aloud, and the President, in a broken voice, entreated the Princess to withdraw, in order that the discussion might be resumed. Still the Parliament, strong in its sense of public duty, shrank from embarking in a rebellion. It was proposed to adjourn the debate, and a mes-

sage was sent to the Princess, requesting her to return to her Palace. But she refused to leave the building while the question at issue remained undecided; and the angry murmurs of the multitude which, agitated by fierce passion, surged through the outer hall, warned the Chamber of the danger of procrastination. At length a decree was passed, by a small majority, that "the Princess of Condé and the Duke of Enghien might reside in the town under the safe-guard of the laws." The result was such as the more prudent councillors had foreseen. Bouillon and La Rochefoucault entered Bordeaux without asking permission. At their instigation the mob attacked and pillaged the house of Lavie, intending to take his life; but he was fortunate enough to escape from their fury in disguise. With the connivance of the majority of the citizens, the Dukes gradually introduced their soldiers into the town, and having thus gained complete command of it, the Parliament was irretrievably committed to a civil war.

It was fortunate for the inhabitants of Bordeaux that they were not exposed alone, and still unprepared for defence, to be crushed by the whole power of the French Crown. At the moment when they raised the standard of insurrection, a

formidable invasion burst across the northern frontiers, and divided the forces of the monarchy. Long and almost incredible mal-administration, and the exhausting efforts of the "Thirty Years' War," had reduced the great Spanish monarchy to the last degree of prostration. Its treasury was bankrupt; its arsenals were empty; a few unarmed vessels of war that lay rotting in its silent dockyards, a few ragged and famished regiments, ill-disciplined, and worse led, represented the invincible Armadas and the superb armies of Philip II. But Castilian pride had spurned the terms of the peace of Munster; and an alluring prospect had now opened upon the Spanish Government of recovering, in a few months, from distracted France, all that had been lost in ten disastrous campaigns. Condé, a name above all others of fear and woe to Spain, was in a French dungeon, and the Southern provinces had risen in arms in his cause. The next in renown of living generals, the skilful Turenne, had arrived at the Court of Brussels, commissioned by a powerful French party to proffer alliance and solicit aid. Even Spanish apathy was roused to turn to account circumstances which promised such sweet revenge and such splendid advantages. The whole force of the Low Countries advanced into Champagne,

under the Archduke Ferdinand and Turenne. Mazarin, emulating the military as well as the literary and artistic tastes of Richelieu, reserved to himself the glory of repelling this inroad; and despatched Marshal la Meillerai, a brave and skilful commander, with a strong body of troops, to quell the Southern rebellion.

A struggle, memorable in the annals of Bordeaux, now began. The royal forces assailed the town vigorously from without, while faction and tumult, secretly fomented by Bouillon and La Rochefoucault, who were incensed by the unconcealed aversion in which they were held by the Parliament, raged within its walls. But the citizens, full of courage and ardour, admirably organised and admirably led by the Dukes, not only repelled their assailants in several sharp conflicts, but won brilliant success in offensive operations. Epernon having seized and fortified the Island of St. George, a post of great advantage above the city, a body of new levies, trained by Bouillon, stormed the works and made prisoners the Chevalier de Canolles and a garrison of three hundred men. And the prudence, winning manners, and unbounded popularity of the young Princess were constantly employed, with the happiest results, in restoring order and healing

dissensions. The greatest difficulty she had to encounter was want of money. Her resources, and the resources of the Dukes had been completely drained by their first great effort. Wealthy adherents, on whose contributions she had relied, failed her at the last moment. The Parliament had, as yet, given her only lukewarm support; and arbitrarily to tax the citizens, already staggering under the burdens of the war, was too odious an expedient to be thought of. But the army was without pay. In order to extricate herself from her embarrassments, she, by the advice of her council, concluded a treaty of alliance with the King of Spain. The sanction of the Parliament to this treasonable proceeding was despaired of, but the Dukes, with the view of involving the magistrates in its consequences, persuaded her to give public audience to Don Joseph Ozorio, the Ambassador sent to her by his Catholic Majesty.

This hazardous step had well-nigh led to a catastrophe. The magistrates, although carried along by the popular torrent, had, from the beginning, regarded with dislike and apprehension the presence and conduct of the Dukes. This last act of defiance effectually roused their national spirit into energetic opposition. They

were the champions of their country's liberties, not the abettors of its hereditary enemies. Far from falling into the trap laid for them, they passed a decree of outlawry against the Ambassador and all who favoured him. The uncompromising condemnation of the Parliament irritated the Princess's Council, and especially stung the haughty soul of Bouillon. He was skilled, in an unusual degree, in the more dangerous arts of a demagogue, in stirring up the foul dregs which, in times of political disorder, rise from the secret caverns of society to float and fester on its surface, the signs and agents of public calamity. He now wielded the weapons of sedition with terrible effect.

On the second day after that on which the obnoxious decree was passed, an armed mob, breathing vengeance, surrounded the Palace of Justice. The Parliament, seeing itself in imminent danger of being massacred, sent pressing messages to Bouillon and La Rochefoucault, imploring them to still the tumult they had raised; but the Dukes refused to interfere. An appeal was then made to the Princess, who had been left in ignorance of the commotion. She instantly hurried to the scene of danger. Her appearance somewhat calmed the fury of the multitude; and, passing

through a lane hedged by dense masses of human beings, whom senseless rage had changed into wild beasts, she entered the House of Assembly, and entreated the magistrates to rescind their decree. These brave men scorned to purchase their lives at the price of dishonour. She returned to the mob and besought it to disperse. The mob replied by an angry roar of imprecation and menace, hoarse and confused as the raving of the sea. While she vainly tried argument and supplication, the measured tramp of a military force announced the advance of the city train-bands to rescue the magistrates. In a few moments the cries and the crash of a fierce conflict rose upon the air. The horrors of a fratricidal struggle, perhaps the destruction of the city, were averted by an act of sublime courage on the part of the Princess. Turning to her attendants, she bade those who loved her follow her, and threw herself between the hostile ranks. A hundred swords, some of them already crimsoned with blood, clashed around her; but the humane feeling that rendered her fearless, seemed to render her invulnerable. The combatants, touched by her prayers and her self-devotion, paused. A moment's respite was sufficient to allow outraged reason to resume her empire; to allow the fearful conse-

quences of their suicidal frenzy to flash upon the minds of all. Claire skilfully seized this moment of horror and remorse, and persuaded the repentant multitude to disperse quietly to their homes. On the following day Don Joseph Ozorio departed from Bordeaux; and, as the pressure of hostilities began to be felt, the Parliament, alarmed for the safety of the city, gave the Princess more cordial support, and sent deputies to solicit the intervention of the Parliament of Paris.

Meanwhile the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin had advanced into Champagne to oppose the Archduke Ferdinand and Turenne. But the campaign was bloodless. The military talents of the great French General were rendered of no avail by the slow incapacity of the Archduke and the deplorable condition of the Spanish army. Having wasted some weeks in fruitless demonstrations, the Spaniards retired ingloriously across the frontier.

The Minister was now at liberty to turn his whole attention to domestic troubles. The revolt of Bordeaux was hourly assuming a more alarming aspect for the Court. The eyes of the whole kingdom were rivetted by the extraordinary spectacle of a young Princess, without the slightest political knowledge or experience, hitherto an

object of compassion or of contempt in the exclusive circles to which she was known, suddenly, as it seemed, endowed by the spirit of love with all the attributes of Minerva, leading conquering armies, ruling councils of astute politicians, swaying popular assemblies, in a cause that appealed most directly to the sympathies of every Frenchman—the cause of a wife and mother, in arms to save her young son, to extricate her illustrious husband from the toils of a crafty foreign adventurer. The tide of public feeling, ever subject to rapid changes among a sensitive and high-spirited people, had set in strongly in her favour. The adherents of the Princes, lately cowed and powerless, were raising their heads in all parts of the kingdom. The alliance between the Court and the Fronde was growing cold, and De Retz appeared to have accomplished the miracle of fixing in his own interests the unstable purposes of Gaston of Orleans. The Parliament of Paris gave a fraternal welcome to the deputation from the Parliament of Bordeaux, and showed a decided disposition to take part with the citizens against the Duke of Epernon. There was little doubt but that the other great judicial bodies of the kingdom would follow the lead of the Parliament of Paris. Mazarin saw that the rebellion was a

flame which, if not promptly extinguished, would consume him. Collecting all available reinforcements, he put himself at their head, and reaching Guienne by rapid marches, assumed the direction of the war. The Queen, taking with her Mademoiselle de Montpensier as a hostage for the fidelity of the Lieutenant-General, followed at a little distance the movements of the army.

The first operation of the Cardinal was to lay siege to the Castle of Vayres on the Dordogne. Its commander, a valiant bourgeois of Bordeaux, named Richon, made an obstinate defence, but the place fell, through the treachery of one of the garrison. In order to strike terror into the insurgents, Mazarin ordered Richon to be hanged as a traitor. He also gave directions that the Chateau of Verteuil, in Poitou, the ancient and magnificent seat of the Dukes of la Rochefoucault, with its unique literary and artistic treasures, and its proud historical memorials, should be burned to the ground. It was among the most cherished recollections of the illustrious family of La Rochefoucault that the Emperor Charles V. had been entertained at Verteuil, and had said on parting from his host, "he had never entered a house which showed more of grandeur, courtesy, and virtue." The present Duke, himself one of

the brighest ornaments of his line, received the tidings of his irreparable loss with composure, merely remarking that it was another sacrifice for the adorable Madame de Longueville. But the barbarous policy of the minister had a precisely opposite effect from that intended by its author. The indignation it aroused bound together all classes in Bordeaux in cordial union for the defence of the city; and it provoked instant reprisals. The tears and prayers of the Princess saved the three hundred prisoners, captured in the Island of St. George, from the vengeance of the populace, but a council of war unanimously decreed the immediate execution of the Chevalier de Canolles. The popular manners and brilliant social qualities of the unfortunate Canolles had made him a general favourite. Being allowed free range of the town on parole, he was the soul of all festive gatherings, and the news of his sentence was brought to him while feasting in gay *abandon* with a party of friends. He heard the announcement with a smile, believing it to be a jest. Claire strove hard to obtain for him a reprieve, or at least a short respite from his doom, hoping to contrive his escape from the city. But her Council was inexorable, the stern laws of war and the public anger imperatively demanding a victim.

The Chevalier was led out to death without even being permitted to see a minister of religion. The people would not suffer such unprofitable delay; they said that, "being a Mazarin, he must necessarily be damned."

The Duke of Bouillon also ordered the demolition of the country house of the Archbishop of Bordeaux. These vigorous measures of retaliation not only put a stop to military executions, but seem to have arrested the unfinished work of destruction at Verteuil.

The Royal Army next attacked the Island of St. George. The garrison, consisting of twelve hundred picked men, finding themselves cut off from communication with Bordeaux by batteries, which Marshal la Meillerai planted along the banks of the Garonne, lost heart, and surrendered after a feeble resistance. All the approaches of the city were now in possession of the Royalists.

The Bordelais had made incredible efforts to put their town in an efficient state of defence. The impediments were, in truth, such as only the most resolute and persevering courage could overcome. A very short time had sufficed to show the value of the vaunting professions of Spain. The absolute ruler of the magnificent empire upon which the sun never set was unable

to aid them with a single musket or a single doubloon. Their military chest was empty. The Princess had pawned her last jewel. The pay of the army was months in arrear. The ancient fortifications of the city had crumbled into ruin. Skilled engineers and the material of war were wanted for the creating and the arming of new ramparts. But the extraordinary popularity of the Princess, the enthusiasm and high military qualities of the Gascons, the energy and example of the Dukes, and, more than all, the fertile genius of Bouillon, supplied every deficiency.

The weakest point in the approaches to the city, and the most exposed to attack, was the Faubourg St. Surin, leading to the gate of Dijeaux. This Faubourg was formed by one or two open streets, and contained the Archbishop's palace, and the ruins of a Roman amphitheatre, said to have been built by the Emperor Gallienus. Bouillon, seeing the danger of allowing it to be occupied by the Royalists, spared no pains in fortifying it; and he was seconded by the citizens with untiring zeal. The whole population, without distinction of rank, age, or sex, turned out to labour at the works. Claire, her ladies, and the little Duke of Enghien shared the toils and dangers of the meanest citizen. Defences sprang

up as if by enchantment. The streets were closed by strong barricades. The buildings on either side were converted into fortresses, loop-holed and garrisoned. Practised marksmen swarmed in the adjacent vine-yards; and out of a heap of rubbish accumulated before the gate of Dijeaux, Bouillon, with admirable skill, constructed a half-moon.

As the Duke had foreseen, Marshal la Meillerai, renowned for success in sieges, selected the Faubourg St. Surin as the chief point of attack. Choice troops, with strong supports, advanced to the assault, under the eye of Cardinal Mazarin. A withering fire in front and flank staggered the foremost columns, but, quickly re-forming under cover of their artillery, they charged the barricades. They were met with equal resolution, and for many hours the combat raged, furious with all the merciless fury of civil war. Through the ruined amphitheatre, through the crashing vine-yards, through the shattered barricades, the crimson tide of battle rolled and ebbed. Soon a thick pall of smoke, rent by flashing bolts of death, and lurid with the glare of burning houses, partially shrouded the horrors of the scene. But the ringing volleys of musketry, the tramp and clash of charging ranks, the fierce cries of the combatants,

the groans of the dying, blent together in all the maddening tumult of battle, pierced the sulphurous war-cloud, and bore tidings to the women and the old men, who with straining eyes and ghastly faces crowded every roof and steeple of the city, of the stern animosity and varying fortunes of the fight. On this bloody day the Gascons well maintained their ancient renown. They repulsed with terrible slaughter six successive assaults of the Royal troops, the soldiers of Rocroi and Lens, trained to victory by Condé and Turenne. And never did the Gascon annals, rich as they are in great deeds of arms and in lives of famous captains, embalm the fame of leaders more worthy of a gallant people. Wherever the danger gathered thickest, wherever the spirit of the defenders, oppressed by superior numbers, was seen to flag, wherever their closing ranks rushed with new ardour upon the foe, there, conspicuous to all, animating and sustaining all, was the impetuous courage of La Rochefoucault, or the serene intrepidity of Bouillon. It was only in the evening, when, thinned by carnage and faint with toil, that an overwhelming onset of fresh troops drove back the Bordelais into their town. On the following day La Meillerai pushed his operations against the half-moon before the gate

of Dijeaux. It was a feeble out-work, only six feet high, and hastily constructed out of a dung heap. But its defence illustrated well the old Spartan maxim, that courage is stronger than stone walls. Day after day carefully chosen storming parties, thrown by the Marshal against this frail barrier, were flung back in utter rout, leaving pyramids of their slain as ghastly monuments of the indomitable valour of the citizens. After thirteen days of incessant fighting it became evident to the Royalist generals that, in order to reduce the city speedily, it would be necessary to resort to a bombardment.

But Cardinal Mazarin was naturally averse to extreme measures; and he knew that, in destroying such a flourishing commercial mart, he would deal a fatal blow at the prosperity of France, and heap everlasting odium upon himself. The critical situation of his affairs, however, rendered an immediate termination of the civil war of the last moment to him. Turenne, beating and outmanœuvering two French Marshals, had made a rapid march, at the head of a body of cavalry, upon Vincennes, with the design of surprising the castle and releasing the Princes. Gaston of Orleans, who, as Lieutenant General of the Kingdom, had remained in the direction of affairs at

Paris, removed his cousins in time. But instead of transferring them to Havre, as the Court desired, he placed them in the Castle of Marcoussy, which belonged to the Count of Entragues, an adherent of his own. The Regent and Cardinal Mazarin learned, with equal mortification and alarm, that their prisoners had passed from their control. Orleans had become the mere puppet of the Minister's most dangerous rival, De Retz; and the custody of Condé made the factious and weak-minded Duke arbiter of France. The Parliament of Paris had sent deputies to mediate between the Government and the Parliament of Bordeaux, and was hourly falling into a less compliant mood. The Spaniards were again in strength on the northern frontier. A resort to the extremities of war, and a prolonged siege, seemed alike to be fraught with disastrous consequences for the Cardinal. "The affair," he said, "was a thistle which pricked on every side." He extricated himself from his dilemma with great address.

In feigned deference to the authority of the Parliament of Paris, he allowed their commissioners to open negotiations with the citizens of Bordeaux, and to intimate that he was disposed to grant favourable terms of peace. The Bordelais, on their part, were well inclined to an

honourable accommodation. The struggle had already overtaxed their resources. They felt their inability to sustain, single-handed, a protracted contest against the Crown; and the aid which they had been led to expect from the Duke of la Force and other powerful neighbours had failed them. But what influenced them most was the consideration that the vintage season had set in. A little longer delay, and the whole of the year's produce of the vineyards, in which their wealth consisted, would be spoiled. An honourable reluctance to fail in their engagements with the Princess and the Dukes alone caused them to hesitate. But Claire and her Council, with great magnanimity, voluntarily released them from their pledges, and requested them to consult only their own interests. The Gascons were incapable of abusing this generosity. To insist on the liberation of the Princes would be useless, but the envoys despatched by the city to the royal camp were instructed to guard the interests of its allies as jealously as its own. The magistrates from Paris assumed the functions of arbitrators, and, after a few conferences, a treaty containing the most indulgent conditions for the insurgents was signed. It stipulated that the Princess should enjoy all her revenues unmolested, and should,

moreover, for her security, be allowed to garrison Montrond with one hundred and fifty men at the public expense; that the confederate nobles should be received into favour, and restored to the estates, honours, and employments they had possessed at the breaking out of the war; and that a general amnesty should be proclaimed. It was also agreed, but in order to save the dignity of the Crown, by a secret article, that the Duke of Epernon should be recalled, and a Governor, approved by the citizens, appointed in his stead. Thus ended the famous war of Bordeaux.

The Princess and the Dukes immediately prepared to quit the city in which they had won so much renown. Before her departure Claire distributed all her remaining funds for the relief of the wounded and destitute officers of her party. The Parliament, as a public mark of the love and veneration of the citizens, redeemed, and by their affectionate importunity, forced her to accept the jewels she had pawned during the difficulties of the war. She was privately assured that, when the grapes had been gathered in, Bordeaux would again declare in favour of her husband. The whole population escorted her to the beautiful galley presented to her by the city, in which she was to ascend the river on her way to Courtras.

As the fairy vessel, bounding over the bright waters of the Garonne, bore her weeping from the scene of her glory, farewell cheers, mingled with sobs and loud lamentations, spoke the grief and love of the Gascons.

On her voyage she was met by Marshal la Meillerai, who invited her to pay a visit to the Regent, at Bourg, a village at the mouth of the Dordogne, where the Court had resided during the siege. She consented, though with reluctance. She was ill and dispirited; she knew the haughty, unforgiving temper of Anne of Austria; but she scrupled to cast away even the faintest chance of serving her husband. The whole Court crowded forth to see the heroine it had so lately despised, and with whose fame all France was ringing. The Regent received her in a private audience, at which the young King, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, and Cardinal Mazarin were present. Mademoiselle de Montpensier has left us in her memoirs a graphic, but most unfriendly description of what passed. With ungenerous malice, she ridicules the woe-stricken appearance and the negligent toilette of the young Princess. But the unconcealed partiality of the "Grande Mademoiselle" for Condé, led her to dislike and disparage Condé's wife; and more impartial ob-

servers bear testimony to the gentle dignity and affecting demeanour of the object of her jealous scorn. Without deigning to notice Mazarin, Claire knelt before the Regent, humbly entreating that her husband might be restored to liberty. Anne of Austria returned a cold and somewhat ungracious answer, and the interview terminated. The Cardinal immediately afterwards paid Claire a visit, and met with a chilling reception. He, however, had long and confidential discussions with Bouillon, La Rochefoucault, and Lenet on the state of public affairs, but could not be induced to give a definite pledge to release the captive Princes. During these fruitless negociations the Princess resumed her interrupted journey to Courtras, whence, after a short delay, she proceeded to Montrond. The party at Bourg soon separated. The Court moved forward for the public entry of the sovereigns into Bordeaux. Bouillon retired to Auvergne, and La Rochefoucault turned his steps to Poitou, to mourn over the blackened ruins of his venerable chateau.

It is not often that the critical judgment of posterity ratifies the verdict of contemporary enthusiasm so completely as in the case of the young Princess of Condé. History affords few examples of such sterling and various excellence

as Claire de Maillé Brezé exhibited during her brief appearance on the political stage. Her cause was the most sacred of all causes for a woman, and was politically just; the imprisonment of Condé, however criminal his conduct, being manifestly illegal. Of her measures to vindicate it, that which alone at that anarchical period was open to censure, the Spanish alliance, must fairly be ascribed to the overruling influence of her council. Wherever her own noble nature had free play, her actions excite only admiration. Her modest wisdom, her unselfish courage, her marvellous eloquence, her magnanimous spirit, ever soaring above the rage of ignoble passions, and the conflict of petty interests, her womanly virtues, softening with their tender poetry the horrors of civil war, blooming so freshly and sweetly in the unwholesome atmosphere of a corrupt society, and the cold shadow of conjugal neglect, combine to form one of the brightest and loveliest of those pictures of feminine worth upon which the eye lingers with delight, amidst so much that is tawdry and so much that is repulsive in the long dim galleries of history.

CHAPTER III.

We left Condé, Conti, and Longueville in the prison fortress of Vincennes on the night that followed their arrest. Their imprisonment was of the severest character. They had for jailor the Sieur de Bar, a rude, harsh soldier, who guarded them with the most jealous vigilance, having pledged his word to the Regent to stab Condé to the heart rather than permit him to escape. Seven soldiers kept watch over them night and day, the descent of the Duke of Beaufort from the same donjon keep into the moat beneath, a feat which had been supposed to require the wings of a bird, showing the need of extraordinary precautions. The entertainment provided for them by the Regent was of the most frugal description. They were required to supply themselves with everything beyond the bare necessaries of life at their own charge. Condé angrily refused to give

any orders to his steward, saying he would rather starve. When his resolve was reported to the Regent, she said, with sarcastic composure, "Let him starve then," and for some days the Princes lived on the coarse prison fare. But Longueville, who was not a hero, and did not feel called upon to assume the character, soon tired of aggravating the hardships of his lot, and undertook, much to Condé's secret satisfaction, the office of caterer. Intelligence of the condition of the prisoners occasionally got abroad through a physician named Dalencé, who was permitted to pay them periodical visits. Conti passed his days and nights in prayer and lamentation. Longueville, when not racked by gout, was generally moody and silent, sunk in the torpor of despair. Condé sang, swore, heard mass, played at battledoor and shuttlecock, dined with an excellent appetite, and reared flowers. When Conti asked in piteous tones for the "Imitation of Christ," Condé shouted for an imitation of the Duke of Beaufort. One day during the war of Bordeaux, Dalencé found the elder Prince cultivating pinks on the terrace of the donjon, and narrated to him the events of the siege. "Who would have believed," said the hero of Rocroi, "that my wife would wage war while I watered my garden!"

The friends of the prisoners, and especially Madame de Longueville, were unceasingly occupied in contriving the means of their escape and secret methods of communication. The crown pieces which the Regent permitted her captives to receive for play, were scooped out, and made vehicles of intelligence. Bottles of wine, with false bottoms, served the same purpose. A crutch destined to support the feeble steps of Conti contained a rapier for his warlike brother. The chief agent of Madame de Longueville was Gourville, one of the most extraordinary of the many eminent adventurers who achieved political distinction in that eventful age. Gourville had begun life as a lackey of the Duke of la Rochefoucault, and had risen from this menial station to be the confidential secretary and councillor of his ambitious and keen-witted master. His advancement allowed him scope for the display of capacity, courage, and adroitness which soon won for him an unrivalled reputation in the conduct of difficult and hazardous enterprises; and his curious memoirs give us pictures of the personages and events of the time hardly inferior in interest and value to those of La Rochefoucault himself. During one of his visits to the neighbourhood of Vincennes, Gourville found means to gain over three of the seven soldiers who guarded

Condé. It was arranged that on a certain Sunday afternoon, while De Bar was attending Vespers, the Prince and his accomplices should fall on the four other guards, disarm and gag them, and, by means of a rope, descend into the castle moat. Gourville undertook to have a body of horsemen in readiness to receive the fugitives and convey them to a place of safety. This was not a more difficult achievement than the escape of the Duke of Beaufort. But on the eve of its proposed execution one of the soldiers who had been suborned was seized with remorse. Entering a church in Paris, he delivered a paper containing hints of the plot to a priest engaged in one of the confessionals. The priest at once forwarded the document to the Coadjutor, whose lynx-eyed suspicion divined the truth. Without losing a moment he caused the guards at Vincennes to be changed, and sent Beaufort to scour the adjacent country with a strong force of cavalry. Though thus mysteriously baffled, Gourville was not disheartened. He had almost matured another promising scheme for the liberation of the captives, when their sudden removal to Marcoussy disconcerted his plans.

Marcoussy was a strong and commodious castle, seated on an island in the middle of a lake within a few leagues' distance of Paris. It was here that

Henry IV. had wooed Henriette d'Entragues, to whose family the castle belonged. Being a private residence as well as a fortress, it allowed greater facilities of escape than Vincennes, and the Princes, though still attended by De Bar, found themselves under less severe restraint. Their friends did not fail to avail themselves of this favourable change of circumstances. A Marechal de Camp, named Arnaud, caused a boat to be constructed of boiled leather, which, admitting of being rolled up in a small compass, might be conveyed to the shore of the lake without attracting observation. He engaged to paddle across in the night to the base of the castle wall. The fidelity of a soldier of the garrison had been corrupted; and, with this man's assistance, the Princes were to slay the other guards as they slept, and let themselves down into the boat. A strong party of armed gentlemen, and the means of a rapid flight to Condé's town of Stenay, awaited them on the opposite shore. The preparations for this daring enterprise were completed, and it was on the point of being executed, when the hopes of the prisoners were again dashed by the unexpected arrival of the Count of Harcourt with an order for their instant removal to the Citadel of Havre.

The unbroken silence in which the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin were received by the inhabitants of Bordeaux, on the occasion of their public entry into that city, after the termination of the war, offered little inducement to them to prolong their absence from the Capital, where the perilous condition of affairs urgently demanded their presence. Turenne and the Spaniards had again invaded the Northern Provinces. The independent action of the Duke of Orleans, in transferring his cousins to Marcoussy, and in opening unauthorised negotiations with the Archduke Leopold, and the recent hostile attitude of the Parliament of Paris, furnished the Government with grave causes of anxiety and alarm. The Regent, thinking that she saw the hand of the Coadjutor in the unfriendly proceedings of Orleans and the Magistrates, was deeply incensed against that prelate, and hurried back to repair the evils effected by his policy. She was detained on the way for some weeks by a dangerous illness, but, when sufficiently recovered to resume her journey, she wrote to the Lieutenant-General, inviting him to meet her at Fontainebleau. De Retz and Madame de Chevreuse, foreseeing the result of the interview, implored the Duke to excuse himself from compliance. But the courage of Gaston was un-

equal to an act of formal disobedience. Anne of Austria's agents skilfully soothed his fears, and after pitiable vacillation, he set out in great trepidation of mind for Fontainebleau, having first fortified his spirits by passing his word to De Retz under no circumstances to consent to the removal of the captive Princes from Marcoussy.

On the night of Orleans' arrival the Regent invited him to a private conference. The cowardly Prince was like wax in her hands. In an hour she had wrung from him an order for the surrender of his cousins to her own keeping, and curtly dismissed him to repose. Relieved from the immediate influence of the terrible spell with which her strong nature enthralled his, and left to his own reflections, Gaston passed the rest of the night distracted by rage, fear and shame. At break of day he called for pistols and a horse, and galloping forth like one demented, wandered for hours through the forest, lost in a stupor of contending emotions. On his return, he sought Mazarin, complained bitterly of the unfair stress placed upon his inclinations by the Regent, and demanded back the order. The Cardinal was blandness itself, and sent to summon an Under-Secretary of State, into whose hands the document had been passed. By one of those happy mischances which

the Minister found so convenient, the Under Secretary could not be discovered until late in the day. It then appeared, as Mazarin informed Gaston with expressions of lively regret, that the order had been at once despatched to the new Governor of Normandy, the Count of Harcourt, a distinguished cadet of the House of Guise, and a zealous adherent of the Government, with instructions to escort the prisoners to the Citadel of Havre, which the Duchess of Richelieu, now in high favour at Court, had placed at the disposal of the Regent. The same day saw Condé and his brothers on their way to their new prison, the secure strength of which shut out from them all further hope of freedom. Condé bore this cruel stroke of fortune with his usual equanimity, relieving his disappointment and the tedium of the journey by composing the following well-known lines on the celebrated soldier who had him in custody.

Cet homme gros et court
Si fameux dans l'histoire
Ce grand Comte d'Harcourt
Tout rayonnant de gloire.
Qui secourut Casal, et qui reprit Turin
Est maintenant recors de Jules Mazarin.

A load of care was now lifted from the mind of Mazarin. The formidable captive, the dread foreboding of whose restoration to freedom, without

his concurrence, had for months oppressed him like a nightmare, was again in his own hands. His arch-enemy, the Coadjutor, was baffled and apparently powerless; rebellion was extinguished; and the Parliament of Paris, gratified by the part it had played during the war of Bordeaux, seemed inclined to rest from agitation. It appeared to the Regent that she might now safely indulge her long-smothered antipathy, and break with De Retz. Madame de Chevreuse, who had followed Orleans to Fontainebleau in order to keep him steady to his pledge, made a formal application for the Cardinal's hat which had been promised to the Coadjutor. The Regent referred the matter to the Council of State, and, taking advantage of the unexpected opposition of Chateauneuf, positively declined to fulfil her engagement. Mazarin then earnestly counselled her not to return to Paris until the young King had attained his majority, or at least to fix her residence in the Louvre, which was strong enough to repel the assaults of an insurgent rabble, and afforded convenient egress to the country. But Anne of Austria, depressed by ill-health, luxurious in her habits, and insensible to fear, sighed for the distractions of the Capital, and could not be persuaded to exchange the ease and splendour of the Palais

Royal for the cheerless discomfort of the Louvre. The Cardinal accompanied her back to Paris, but, after a short stay, set out for Champagne to oppose Turenne and the Spaniards. He carried his fortunes with him. His presence with the French army ushered in a most brilliant campaign. Rhetel was taken before the eyes of Turenne. The Spanish army was routed in a decisive battle; its great Commander escaped from the field with only one hundred and fifty horse; and in a few days not an enemy was left in arms on the soil of France. Mazarin returned again to Paris, victorious over all his foes. Never had his position in France appeared so lofty and so secure. But it was in reality undermined by a secret cabal, which all his craft had failed to penetrate, and a single false move might send it crashing into ruin.

The three parties which distracted the State, the Old Fronde, of which De Retz, Beaufort, and Madame de Chevreuse were the leading spirits; the adherents of the imprisoned Princes, who styled themselves the New Fronde; and the Court party, popularly known as Mazarins, were at this time not unequally represented in the Parliament of Paris. The advocates of the Princes, though numerically the weakest section, possessed a great

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superiority in moral power, for they were countenanced by Molé, De Mesmes, and Omer Talon, who were the glory of the Assembly; staunch supporters of the Royal Authority within the limits fixed by the Declaration of October, but also faithful guardians of the constitution. The cordial union of any two of these parties controlled the Decrees of the High Court, and must, so long as the power of the Crown was placed in partial abeyance by a Royal minority, have a decisive political effect. Common hatred and fear of Condé had produced the extraordinary coalition between the Court and the Fronde, between faction and authority, which resulted in his overthrow. The popular voice had applauded the League; the Regent and Mazarin loaded their new allies with favours and caresses; De Retz was ostensibly admitted to the most secret counsels of the Government; Madame de Chevreuse seemed to resume her old place in the heart of her mistress; Beaufort again swaggered in the Royal Presence Chamber, and in the first fever of joy and triumph deep-rooted enmities and jarring interests appeared to be buried in oblivion. But this unnatural alliance could not be permanent. Only the strong motive of self-preservation could have compelled such antagonistic elements into a

momentary cohesion. When the pressure was relaxed, they flew asunder from an inherent principle of repulsion. It would have been as consistent with the laws of nature for two suns to shine in the same firmament, as for Mazarin and De Retz to rule in harmony; and each was devoured by the ambition to be Prime Minister of France. Contrary to the wishes and intentions of his confederates, the wily Italian, strong in the unalterable attachment of Anne of Austria, reaped all the real advantages of the coalition. But as his authority again grew manifestly predominant, the popular favour ebbed from him with increasing rapidity. By the same movement it flowed towards his captives. The gallant defence of Bordeaux aroused general sympathy for Condé's wife and son. The misfortunes of the hero of whom they had been so proud touched the heart of a martial and generous people. The besieger of Paris, the fiery enemy of popular rights, the selfish dictator, were forgotten in the Great Captain who had so well avenged the defeats of Pavia and St. Quentin. This revulsion of public feeling was watched with the keenest interest by De Retz. It was with unutterable rage and shame that the haughty prelate found that, notwithstanding his brilliant genius and his unrivalled talents for

intrigue, he was miserably duped by the unscrupulous artifice of his rival. His nomination by the Crown for a Cardinal's hat, the splendid reward for which he had consented to exalt Mazarin to such a height of power, was first evaded, and afterwards flatly refused, on insulting pretexts; while the support he afforded the Minister sensibly diminished the popular favour upon which his own power was based. He knew that the establishment of a strong executive was incompatible with the existence of an authority springing from the fierce play of revolutionary passions; that its first care would be to crush the spirit of faction which, like some potent magician of Eastern story, he had evoked to minister to his behests. Without, therefore, at all sharing in the new-born sympathy for the imprisoned Princes which pervaded men's minds, self-interest and revenge prompted him to listen eagerly to the suggestion of a coalition between the Old and the New Fronde for the liberation of the captives and the overthrow of Mazarin.

The idea of this new political combination originated in the teeming brain of Anne of Gonzaga, the Princess Palatine. In an age strongly coloured by the influence of female celebrities, as remarkable for brilliant intellectual gifts and

beauty as for easy profligacy of life, Anne of Gonzaga was pre-eminently distinguished by her political talents, her wit, and her eccentric gallantries. The birth and connexions of this extraordinary woman were illustrious. Her father, the Duke of Mantua and Nevers, had been expelled from his Italian principality by the Spaniards on account of his French extraction, and restored by the arms and policy of Richelieu. Mary of Gonzaga, her sister, some years before one of the brightest ornaments of the Court of France, and the prize for which the aspiring Cinq-Mars rashly staked his fortunes and his life, was now Queen of Poland. Her own husband was a younger son of the unfortunate King of Bohemia and Elizabeth Stuart. The story of her amour with the Duke of Guise, as related by Mademoiselle de Montpensier, affords an amusing view of one side of her character.

Guise, the representative of the historic family which above all others had linked its name in imperishable renown with the great events and the mournful tragedies of the stormiest and most eventful century of modern history, was himself a prodigy. He was a living anachronism, a knight-errant instinct with the adventurous spirit of the 11th century, flung, as it were, by some

convulsion of the moral order, into the age of Louis XIV. Some of his enterprises might have adorned a page in the History of Amadis de Gaul; all of them were more or less tinged with the hues of romance. He lived the life of Sir Launcelot at a time when even what was most admirable in chivalry was withering under the immortal satire of Cervantes. Yet, like so many of the mediæval barons, he united to his passion for the marvellous considerable practical ability. During the most notable period of his career, while he was engaged at Naples, after the downfall of Massaniello, in endeavouring to fix on his own head the crown of the Two Sicilies, he displayed talents for government of no mean order. But the tone of his mind lent to everything he did a ridiculous air of exaggeration; and his countrymen, discriminating between splendid and fantastic exploits, have styled Guise the Hero of Romance, Condé the Hero of History.

This extraordinary nobleman was titular Archbishop of Rheims. His episcopal dignity, however, sat lightly upon him. He paid his vows at the shrine of beauty with all the fervour of the joyous chivalry of Languedoc in the days of the Troubadours. His brilliant qualities, his

romantic wooing, and the resistless spell which daring deeds fling around the imaginations of women, enslaved the sensitive heart of Anne of Gonzaga. But, alas! the inconstancy of man! Guise, growing tired of his conquest, quitted Paris rather unceremoniously, and went to Brussels. The Princess pursued him, disguised in male attire; but, finding the chase hopeless, she assumed a less questionable shape, publicly announced her marriage with her truant lover, and styled herself Madame de Guise. Unfortunately for the success of this decorous fiction, Guise, with strange perversity, precipitately espoused another lady. The Princess bore his ingratitude with the composure of a stoic, quietly resumed her maiden style and dignity, and, as Mademoiselle de Montpensier says, returned to Paris as though nothing had happened.

But, to an irregular fancy, the Princess Palatine united not only rare capacity, but a generous heart. She had conceived an enthusiastic admiration for Condé, and the Regent had given her just cause of dissatisfaction. In order to extricate her hero, she laboured with consummate skill to form a political combination, which would have appeared chimerical, if it were not that, in the words of La Rochefoucault, "all things happen in

France." It soon became manifest that her toil was not fruitless. The young Princess of Condé came up to Paris to supplicate the intervention of Parliament against the illegal detention of her husband. Her petition, which was drawn up by Molé in terms flattering to the self-esteem of the Magistrates, met with no opposition from the adherents of De Retz, and a day was appointed for taking it into consideration. After this first successful move the Princess Palatine proposed, at the suggestion of the Coadjutor and Madame de Chevreuse, that a formal treaty of alliance should be concluded between Condé and the Fronde, the terms to be specified in writing and signed by accredited representatives of the contracting parties. The conditions were, the thorough co-operation of the Fronde, in vigorous efforts to wrest the Princes from the clutches of the Government; the services of the party to be requited by Condé, in the event of success, by the marriage of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse with the Prince of Conti, the obtaining of a red hat for De Retz, and the gift of one hundred thousand crowns to Beaufort's rapacious mistress, Madame de Montbazon.

Circumstances favoured Anne of Gonzaga's proposal. The affecting death of the Dowager

Princess of Condé and the triumphant return of Mazarin from his campaign against Turenne occurring almost at the same moment, supplied the strongest incentives of grief, fear, and hatred to second her arguments. But La Rochefoucault, who was commissioned by Madame de Longueville to represent her family in the negotiations, hesitated to accept the treaty. He detested De Retz, and considered it more for the advantage of the prisoners to come to an arrangement with Mazarin, who could, by a word, restore them to freedom. During the conferences at Bourg, after the war of Bordeaux, the marriage of Conti with the Countess Martinozzi had been hinted at as a means of terminating the feud between Condé and the Minister. There is no doubt that Mazarin was ready to sacrifice much for the honour of an alliance with the House of Bourbon. But the project had been indignantly scouted by Condé when suggested to him through the physician Dalencé. The Prince declared he would rather remain a prisoner all his life than purchase freedom on such degrading terms. Still the amicable professions of the Cardinal had left La Rochefoucault ground for hope that a reconciliation was not impossible; and, before giving an answer to the Princess Palatine, he paid several midnight visits to the Palais Royal to urge the

Minister to consent to an immediate accommodation. He even disclosed to the Cardinal, so far as he could do so without betraying the secret of the new coalition, the formidable perils that must attend further hesitation. But Mazarin, though proof against the arts of deceit, was the easy dupe of plain dealing. A suspicion that an antagonist might be honest never seems to have crossed his mind. He considered the gulf which mutual injuries had dug between Condé and the leaders of the Fronde to be eternal, and he could not believe in the reality of danger so frankly announced. To the prophetic warning with which La Rochefoucault reluctantly closed their last interview he answered with incredulous badinage; and the Duke, proceeding straight to the Hotel of the Princess Palatine, accepted the conditions of the Fronde on behalf of the imprisoned Princes.

In order to give the highest prestige and the stamp of legitimate authority to the Coalition, it only remained to obtain the formal adhesion of the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. This, however, was no easy matter. Orleans, though loud in his denunciation of the means by which his consent to the removal of his cousins to Havre had been extorted, and liberal of promises, shrank

from the act of signing the treaty with ludicrous terror. His secretary, Caumartin, a creature of De Retz, followed him about for several days with the document in one pocket, an ink-stand in another, and a pen behind his ear. Gaston, with that fine sense of danger with which the weaker animals are gifted, either avoided being alone, or, by irregular movements, rapid divings through intricate passages, forced marches along remote lobbies, and skilful stratagems that baffled all probable calculations as to time and place, eluded the pursuit. Such an elaborate system of strategy as he practised to confound and vanquish his secretary, if applied to war or politics, would have established his fame as a warrior or a statesman. At last the wily Caumartin suddenly disappeared from the scene of operations, leaving his master to enjoy his hard-won repose. Over security, which has so often lost the fruits of the most profound combinations and the most signal success, proved fatal to Gaston. As he was proceeding incautiously, in the excusable exultation of victory, from one room to another, he fell into an ambuscade. Caumartin lay in wait for him between the double doors, and, springing forward, placed the pen between his fingers and offered his own back as a

writing-desk. The Duke accepted his fate without further resistance, and, after the manner of an ancient Roman falling on his sword, signed the treaty with averted eyes.

The first move of the confederates proclaimed the existence of the new alliance. On the day appointed for the consideration of the Princess of Condé's petition in the Palace of Justice, the Old and the New Fronde gave it their united support. Orleans deserted the Court, and a decree was passed by an immense majority that a deputation of the Magistrates, headed by their First President, should proceed to the Palais Royal, and pray the Regent to set the Princes at liberty. The news of the proceedings in the High Court fell like a thunder clap on the ears of Mazarin, awaking him from his dream of security to shudder at the abyss which had suddenly opened beneath his feet. For the first time since the commencement of the Regency, he found arrayed against him the Princes of the Blood, the great nobles, the Parliament of Paris, and the leading demagogues; and that too in a cause which was just, popular, and fortified by the sanction of the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. Hitherto he had with difficulty found safety in the dissensions of his enemies. Now, quailing before the

hatred of all classes, and only able to rely for support on the uncertain authority of a Queen Regent —like himself a foreigner—he had to confront a league which might have appalled the bold genius of Richelieu, though armed with all the power and prestige of an absolute King. There was one move which might have checkmated his foes, and it was expected by De Retz with the keenest anxiety. This was for the Regent to quit Paris at once with the young King. The armies were commanded by able generals devoted to Mazarin. The provinces were governed by his adherents. The strength of the coalition lay in the Capital. Safe beyond its walls with Anne of Austria and her son, and having Condé in his hands, he might set at defiance the decrees of the Parliament and the anger of Monsieur. In less than a year Louis would attain his fourteenth year, when, by the laws of France, he entered upon the full exercise of the Royal authority. As the young King was passionately attached to his mother, this event, while terminating the Regency, must bring to her, and, as a consequence, to the Minister, a vast increase of power; would render armed opposition, which during a minority was regarded as legitimate, or at the worst venial, a political crime of the deepest dye. But Anne of

Austria could not be induced to leave the Palais Royal. Her physical energies were still depressed from recent illness. Holding Orleans in supreme contempt, and feeling assured of her ability to make him again her pliant instrument, she underrated the gravity of the crisis, and preferred to brave its perils rather than endure the discomfort of exile from the Capital.

In these circumstances Mazarin's position demanded the exercise of consummate prudence, and of all the wary and patient craft of which he was a master. In his intense vexation of mind, he precipitated his downfal by a blunder which would have disgraced a political novice. The Revolution which had hurled Charles I. of England from his throne, and consigned him to a scaffold, was then in the full flood of its sanguinary triumph. One night while Orleans was supping with the Regent at the Palais Royal, the recent proceedings of the Parliament of Paris coming under discussion, the Cardinal, in an explosion of rage, compared the designs of the leaders of the Fronde to those of Fairfax and Cromwell. The language of Anne of Austria was equally violent. Gaston, dumbfoundered by amazement and terror, escaped with all possible haste to the Luxembourg, and, finding De Retz there, repeated to the

Prelate the observations he had just heard. On the following morning the Coadjutor went to the Palace of Justice, reported to the assembled Magistrates, on the authority of Monsieur, what Mazarin had said, in such a manner as to convey the impression that the invidious comparison was intended to apply to the leading members of the High Court, and proposed to petition the King to expel the Minister for ever from his presence and councils, and to restore the captive Princes to liberty. The astute Prelate had not miscalculated the extent of the advantage given to him by Mazarin's imprudent speech. The Parliament, eminently loyal as a body, and holding in deep horror the excesses of the English Republicans, quivered with anger, and voted the address to the King by acclamation. Paris welcomed this decree with extravagant delight. The streets blazed with bonfires; and Orleans, inspirited by the popular demonstrations, publicly declared that he would not again enter the Palais Royal until the Cardinal had departed.

This sudden political tempest burst upon the Court with a violence as resistless as it was unforeseen. Anne of Austria vainly strove to allay it by a message to the Palace of Justice, charging the Coadjutor with deliberate falsehood, and pro-

mising, to release the Princes when Madame de Longueville and Turenne made their submission. The tumult swelled fiercer and higher; and the Parliament followed up its first blow by a decree of perpetual banishment against Mazarin and his family. The Cardinal saw that in Paris all was lost. The chances of the game, however, were by no means desperate. The revolt of the Capital did not at that time mean the fall of a dynasty, or even of a Minister. Paris was only the largest and most important of many flourishing cities enjoying municipal freedom, each of them the chief town of a province which still preserved a large measure of self-government. That decisive and malign influence, so often exemplified in our own times, which its restless turbulence exercises on the fate of the kingdom, is the result of an all-embracing and slowly-perfected system of administrative centralization, which was the growth of a later and more despotic period. In order to relieve the Regent from the odium and peril that must attend his presence at the Palais Royal, in defiance of the votes of the Parliament, and at the same time to secure for himself full liberty of action, Mazarin took formal, and, as he professed, final leave of the Court, and quitted the city at night, disguised as an officer of cavalry. But before his

departure, he concerted with his mistress a plan of operations against their common enemies, and received from her a written order to De Bar, which placed the imprisoned Princes unreservedly at his disposal. It was arranged that Anne of Austria, in order to gain time, should feign acquiescence in the exile of her Minister, and concede Condé's release, upon the condition that the insurgents at Stenay laid down their arms. She was next to endeavour, secretly, to break up the confederacy by detaching from it the fickle Lieutenant-General. Should her attempts upon Orleans fail, she pledged herself to the Cardinal, at all risks, to carry off the young King from Paris, and renew the civil war.

In pursuance of this policy, Anne graciously received a deputation of the High Court, publicly spoke of Mazarin's rule as a thing of the past, allowed messengers to be sent to summon Madame de Longueville and Turenne to surrender Stenay, and entreated Orleans to resume his attendance at the Council of State. The Duke, however, rendered prudent by experience and the advice of De Retz, declined to venture his person again at the Palais Royal until Condé had arrived. The Regent employed, without avail, the interposition of the Parliament to bring about an

interview; and, when accepting his excuse of illness as genuine, she offered to call on him at the Luxembourg, Gaston, half beside himself with rage and terror, sent her word that when she entered his palace at one door he would leave it by another. Then, loyal to her compact with her favourite, who quietly watched the course of events from St. Germain, she made preparations for a second nocturnal flight from the capital. But the chiefs of the opposition were on the alert. The suspicious sojourn of Mazarin in the neighbourhood of Paris quickened their vigilance. The Royal Household and the Council swarmed with the Minister's secret foes. Even the most faithful servants of the Queen, chafed by his meddling supervision, and attributing all her inquietudes to his pernicious counsels, rejoiced at his downfal.

Late one night, after she had retired to rest, Madame de Chevreuse received an intimation from Chateauneuf, who was still Keeper of the Seals, of Anne of Austria's intention to escape from the Palace at two o'clock on the following morning. The Duchess, prompt and bold as in the days of her adventurous youth, immediately despatched her daughter in a hackney coach to Notre Dame to call up the Coadjutor, and herself

hurried half-dressed to the Luxembourg to incite Monsieur to arrest the Regent's flight. 'De Retz fully recognised the danger of the position, of which he had been apprehensive for some days. While Beaufort watched the Palace with a body of horsemen, he made his way, in hot haste, to rouse the Lieutenant General to action. On reaching Gaston's bedroom a strange scene met his eyes. The Duchess of Orleans, sitting up in the bed, and Madame de Chevreuse leaning over it, in equally scanty costume, from the other side, were pouring forth appeals, reproaches, and sarcasms on the terror-stricken Duke, who had entrenched himself deep beneath the bed clothes, and was not to be dislodged. It was in vain that De Retz, suppressing by heroic efforts the laughter that convulsed him, exhausted argument and expostulation. In vain the Duchess of Orleans, a stout Lorraine Princess of phlegmatic temperament, added her entreaties with an ardour which was ever afterwards a subject of amazement to her friends. In vain Madame de Chevreuse flung herself in passionate *abandon* on the coverlet, and enforced persuasion by a liberal display of her charms. Gaston, petrified by fear, was insensible to reason or prayer, or the allurements of dishevelled beauty. At every fresh assault he buried

himself still deeper beneath the bed-coverings, and uttered feeble groans. Meanwhile the precious moments were passing away. The coalition was paralysed by the pusillanimity of its chief.

De Retz, however, was not the man to shrink from responsibility in such an emergency. Assured of the support of a powerful confederacy, and of the ultimate approval of Orleans, he resolved to act boldly. His rupture with Mazarin had brought back to him all his old popularity, and, by means of his agents, he had long since organised the *canaille* of the metropolis, congregated in the purlieus of Notre Dame, into a formidable revolutionary force obedient to his will. Returning to the Archiepiscopal Palace, he issued orders for a general rising to prevent the King being carried off to St. Germain. From the belfry of the venerable Cathedral the tocsin of revolt crashed forth upon the midnight air, and soon the iron tongues of a hundred towers and steeples, answering in wild clangour, called Paris to arms. Adherents of the imprisoned Princes, partizans of the Fronde, grave magistrates, substantial citizens, hastened to obey the summons. And, disentombed from their pestilential haunts, disgorged by dens of vice, into which a sunbeam

had never penetrated, loathsome wretches, steeped in crime, whom society had long since placed under her bán and sent to fester in obscure infamy, stole forth to prey on the public calamity, like ghouls flocking to a feast of death. The numerous streams of insurrection converged in a tumultuous sea around the Palais Royal. The shadows of night only partially concealed the motley character of the assembled host. There were nobles there whose ancestors had been renowned in the crusades. There were ecclesiastics of rank, whose cassocks peeped out from beneath the folds of large military cloaks. There were sober burghers, wealthy and peace-loving, who had donned helmet and cuirass in the cause of the Parliament. And, far outnumbering all the others, there were the pariahs of civilization, armed with broken halberds which had shivered at Agincourt on the ranks of English men-at-arms, or with rusty pikes which had flashed at Ivry. The Royal Guards having received orders to offer no resistance, the multitude forced their way into the court-yard of the Palace, and loudly demanded to see the King. Their clamours soon filled every window with trembling, half-naked courtiers, ignorant of the cause of the commotion, whose terrified fancies saw hell let loose beneath them,

as the fitful light of brandished torches threw a dusky glare upon the upturned mass of revolting faces, on which every vice had set its stamp. In this moment of awful peril, Anne of Austria displayed all the courage of her race. Her spirit, the imperial spirit of the Cæsars, did not quail for a moment. Commanding the doors to be flung open, she advanced to meet the insurgents, inquired their wishes, laughed at their apprehensions, and herself conducted the foremost of them, among whom some of the chiefs, and even De Retz himself, were reported to have mingled in disguise, into the bed chamber of the young King. Louis was lying on his little couch, apparently buried in the soft sleep of childhood, undisturbed by the terrors and tumult of the night. The rude rabble, awed into silent reverence, gazed breathlessly for a moment on the beautiful boy, and crept away murmuring benedictions. Little did they imagine what suppressed passion of resentment and wounded pride was at that moment tearing the heart of their young monarch; or that the outrages, of which he seemed unconscious, would live in his mind in burning memories, moulding his character and policy to the last hour of his reign. At dawn the mob dispersed; but the triumph of the Coalition was complete.

Orleans, on awaking later in the morning, and finding all danger over, assumed the entire responsibility of the successful movement. He ordered the burgher militia to replace the Royal Guards at the city gates, and took upon himself all the functions of Government. Anne of Austria, now virtually a prisoner in the Palais Royal, found herself compelled to sign the decree of outlawry against her Minister, and another decree for the immediate liberation of Condé and his brothers. La Rochefoucault, the President Viole, and the Under Secretary of State, La Vrillière, were at once despatched with the order of release to the Governor of Havre.

Mazarin was still at St. Germain when intelligence reached him of the Regent's captivity, and of the sanction wrung from her to the hostile decrees of the Parliament. Without losing a moment he started off with a strong escort to Havre, designing to seize the place and the persons of the Princes. He found, on his arrival, that the news of his reverses had outstripped him. De Bar replied to his summons for admission that he was ready to obey the Regent's order as to the disposal of the prisoners, but that, having sworn by her Majesty's permission to hold the fortress for the Duke of Richelieu, he could not open its gates to

the Cardinal's train. Mazarin then meditated upon carrying away the Princes to some other place of security. He abandoned this project, however, on learning that the neighbouring gentry were rising in arms to oppose it. His only remaining resource was to play the courtier, to endeavour to win by address what he was unable to extort. Leaving his attendants without the walls, he suddenly presented himself before Condé, announced to the Prince that he was free, and sought by argument, flattery, and falsehood to cozen him into an alliance. Condé's prison had been as impervious to intelligence from the outer world as the grave itself. In the first transports of his joy, he welcomed his suppliant enemy cordially, and asked him to dinner. But, in a little time, the couriers sent forward by La Rochefoucault putting the Prince in possession of the real condition of affairs, the civility with which he had listened to the Cardinal's overtures changed to sarcastic politeness. The baffled Minister still lingered in the chateau, clinging to the fading shadow of hope with all the tenacity of despair, and drinking to its very dregs the bitter cup of humiliation. All his fine-spun schemes, all the intricate meshes of his policy, constructed by the craft and toil of years, had been swept away by the breath of

popular passion, as if they had been gossamer woof. The edifice of his power, as it towered defiantly in its strength and splendour, had suddenly crumbled into dust. And his heart was a prey to the torments of abased ambition, and to the gnawing of ingratitude—the most pitiless fury that haunts fallen greatness. He saw his dependents, creatures of his favour and flatterers of his prosperity, transformed by the touch of adversity into pitiless critics, who reproached him with freezing looks, and words of bitter scorn. He had not the grandeur of soul that bears calmly the cruel strokes of fortune. His supple but weak spirit grovelled in the dust under the pressure of such unforeseen calamity. Seeking another interview with Condé, he sounded the depths of meanness in abject entreaties for his victim's protection. The Prince, moved to contempt, not compassion, by such unworthy supplications, coldly bade his humbled foe adieu, and set out with Conti and Longueville for Paris. Mazarin fixed his gaze upon their receding forms until they vanished into space, with the sense of hopeless agony with which the shipwrecked wretch sees the plank, that is his last refuge from destruction, eluding his grasp, and then turned his steps towards exile. But, in the moment of his pro-

found despair, a ray of consolation broke through the cloud of his sorrows. La Vrillière arrived, bearing him letters from Anne of Austria, which assured him of her eternal devotion, of her intention of conforming herself absolutely, in all things, to his counsels, and of her fierce purpose to open the way for his return to power by the destruction of all his enemies. Revived by the new spring of hope which the words of his attached mistress called forth in his breast, the Cardinal pursued his way, in a happier mood, to the Castle of Bruhl, near Bonn, which the Elector of Cologne had offered him as a resting place.

Condé was now delivered from the greatest affliction that can befal impatient genius, the compulsory inaction of captivity. His eagle spirit was again free to soar into its native atmosphere of glory. The rapture of recovered liberty, so exquisite in itself, was rendered intoxicating to his fiery temperament by the triumph that awaited him at Paris. All that were illustrious and powerful among his countrymen, the most distinguished and opposite politicians, the most revered magistrates, the most renowned warriors, the most celebrated women, the Fronde, the Parliament, the great nobility, had combined to wrest him from the clutches of the Regent, and now

crowded forth with emulous enthusiasm to swell the pomp of his triumphal return. The Lieutenant-General met his cousin at some distance from the city gates, and, entering his coach, led the magnificent procession. The citizens who, thirteen months before, had lit bonfires to celebrate the Prince's arrest, now celebrated his release with almost delirious joy. Fireworks, public banquets, and universal revelry proclaimed their delight. The power of his enemies lay crushed beneath the movement which had shattered the bars of his dungeon. Mazarin was an impoverished outcast, of whom no man any longer took account. The Regent, deserted and unregarded except by the patriotic Molé, who mourned the victory of 'mob-violence, even in a righteous cause,' nursed her sullen anger in the solitude of the Palais Royal; while the saloons of the Luxembourg and the Hotel de Condé were thronged with exulting guests. In the spring-tide of his popularity, the Prince was urged by some of his ablest adherents to shut up Anne of Austria in a convent, and to transfer her authority to the Duke of Orleans or himself. And this advice was judicious. There are crises in the lives of public men which shape their whole future, and in which audacity is the highest

wisdom. He had ample experience of Anne of Austria's immoveable attachment to Mazarin, and of the duplicity with which she knew how to veil her animosity towards himself. He was aware that the approaching majority of her son would place her in an almost unassailable position. But his entire career illustrated how completely the rapid perception and the iron will that decide the fate of battles, may lose their keenness and vigour in political conflict. Dazzled by the reflection of his own importance in the public rejoicings, and halting, as usual, between his respect for the throne and the promptings of personal ambition, he dallied in serene indecision, until the opportunity of making himself supreme in the State had passed away for ever.

Mazarin, from his retreat at Bruhl, ruled the councils of the Regent with undiminished sway, and strenuously urged her to bend all her efforts to detach Condé from the Fronde. The keen-sighted Italian discerned that this might be effected with time and patience. At first, indeed, the language of the Confederates breathed enthusiasm or gratitude. The Prince tacitly acquiesced in the conditions which had been accepted in his name; the bearing of the Fronde evinced generous confidence. But the seeds of disruption that lay

in the very heart of the Coalition, soon burst forth into a plentiful crop of discord. The Prince began to think that the price he was called upon to pay for naked liberty, shorn of the great dignities and employments which the Crown alone could give him back, was unreasonably high. Bred up in deep veneration for the throne, which he might, by a not improbable course of events, be called to fill, a despot by nature and by military habit, he regarded power springing from popular tumults with feelings of disgust, from the scope of which the great Episcopal demagogue could not altogether escape. Between De Retz and La Rochefoucault there smouldered the bitter hatred of rival wits, between Madame de Longueville and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse the not less bitter hatred of rival beauties. With such sentiments alive in the minds of the leading personages on either side, permanent union was impossible; even the surface of their daily intercourse could not long remain unruffled. Cordiality gradually cooled into formal courtesy, and courtesy was chilled by altercation and distrust. From the very nature of the circumstances, Condé's popularity, which had so suddenly blazed forth on his enemies like a consuming flame, waned with equal rapidity. The assembly of nobles, which had met to demand

his freedom, continued its sittings after his return, and, moved by the jealousy of the political powers accorded or confirmed to the Parliament of Paris by the Decree of the 24th of October, petitioned the Regent to convoke the States-General. The Parliament, conscious that the meeting of national representatives would throw itself into "dim eclipse," and might perhaps annihilate its new political functions, resisted the demand with all its might. Both parties, urging their recent services, confidently appealed to the Prince for support. Condé endeavoured to evade the difficulty by standing neutral between his conflicting obligations, and referring the rival claims to the Duke of Orleans for decision. He only succeeded in incurring the reproach of ingratitude from both sides. It was not without reason that he exclaimed one day, when overwhelmed with applications which it was not in his power to satisfy, but the failure of each of which carried with it a sense of injury, that the Duke of Beaufort had been happy in owing his liberty to his own servants.

When the novelty of his position as a popular idol had worn off, and over-wrought feeling had collapsed into reciprocal disappointment, Condé began to listen complacently to the overtures of the Regent. He consented to receive back from her

his former honours and offices. As a proof of his good will, he successfully opposed in her interests the convoking of the States-General; a measure, ardently desired by De Retz, as being likely to lead to a prolongation of the Regency, with Orleans as Regent, and himself as Prime Minister. Anne of Austria suddenly throwing off the appearance of sullen apathy in which she had shrouded the workings of her mind since the triumph of the Coalition, dismissed Chateauneuf, the Minister of the Fronde, transferred the seals to Molé, recalled Chavigny, who possessed Condé's entire confidence, to the Council of State, and publicly defied the Duke of Orleans when he protested against her independent exercise of authority. The leading Frondists held a council at the Luxembourg, which Condé attended, to determine how they should meet this vigorous attack, with the secret of which they were as yet unacquainted. The Coadjutor proposed that Orleans, with Condé's assistance, should depose the Regent, and assume the reins of Government, Beaufort and he undertaking to excite a popular insurrection. Orleans, before venturing an opinion, looked nervously at the Prince, who sarcastically remarked that he was but a coward in back-alley and slop-pail warfare, but would cheerfully take

horse in the provinces at the orders of Monsieur. Beaufort rudely rebuked his old confederate, whose word had hitherto been law to him, for assuming his co-operation. The Lieutenant-General, scared by the answer of his cousin, hastily broke up the conference. In the tone and language of the Prince, and still more in the unfriendly self-assertion of Beaufort, the practised intelligence of the Coadjutor read the dissolution of the league. With his usual decision, he announced to Orleans that the political aims, which the members of the Coalition had bound themselves to accomplish, having been achieved, he no longer felt justified in neglecting the care of his diocese; and he retreated again to the seclusion of Notre Dame.

Anne of Austria now intimated to Condé that he might name his own terms, if he would repudiate his engagements with the Fronde. With a facility, as shameful as it was blind, Condé accepted the proposal. The Under Secretaries of State were instructed to draw up a treaty of alliance, which handed over half the kingdom to the Prince and his immediate following; and the Prince, on his side, undertook to give a public pledge of his change of policy, by the rupture of his brother's engagement with Mademoiselle de

Chevreuse. There was little difficulty in finding a specious pretext for this breach of faith. Mademoiselle de Chevreuse was in the bloom of youth. Her manners possessed an exquisite charm, which rendered the soft spell of her voluptuous beauty irresistible. But she was depraved even beyond the depravity of that dissolute period. Her amour with the Coadjutor was a public scandal. Conti, though passionately attached to her, consented, on being furnished with plain proofs of her misconduct, to renounce the alliance. Good feeling, as well as policy, would have clothed the intimation of this purpose in forms and language of respectful courtesy calculated to deprive the quarrel of unnecessary bitterness. The lady's kindred, the Duchess of Orleans, the Princess Palatine, the Princes of Lorraine-Guise, had not only laid the House of Condé under the deepest obligations, but boasted a lineage as lofty as its own. But the Prince caused his will to be signified in a manner so arrogant and insulting, as justly to provoke the mortal enmity of Madame de Chevreuse, and her powerful family connexions. That spirited lady and De Retz meditated revenge. Orleans renounced the friendship of his faithless cousin. But the person most ungenerously injured by the flagrant ingratitude of Condé was

the Princess Palatine. Confiding in his honour, she had given her note of hand for one hundred thousand crowns to Madame de Montbazon, and had pledged herself to obtain for De Retz a Cardinal's hat. Condé repaid the matchless skill and devotion, to which he owed his liberty, by leaving her to bear the burden of the obligations contracted for his benefit. She tried to obtain the coveted seat in the conclave for the Coadjutor, through the intervention of her sister, the Queen of Poland; but loyal feeling forbade the Queen to act in the matter without the consent of Anne of Austria, her early benefactress. Cut to the heart by the baseness of her hero, and by her inability to perform promises made in the fervour of disinterested enthusiasm, Anne of Gonzaga sought a reconciliation with the Regent, and offered her friendship to Mazarin. The placable Cardinal, appreciating her worth, responded with cordiality to her overtures, and warmly recommended her to the favour of his mistress.

Anne of Austria had now dissolved the victorious host of her enemies; the great confederacy which had jeopardised her authority, and even her liberty, was rent into hostile factions. But her troubles were by no means at an end. Condé imperiously pressed for the fulfilment of their contract; and, on

the first signs of evasion on her part, his language grew more peremptory and menacing. It had never entered into her mind to make concessions so fatal to the Crown. She had merely thrown them out as a decoy to lure the Prince to his destruction; and he, in his arrogant selfishness, had greedily swallowed the glittering bait. But she now found herself isolated, and, without resource, exposed to his fury. In this new warfare, circumstances for a time gave him peculiar advantages. The constant passing of couriers between Bruhl and the Palais Royal irritated and alarmed the Parliament and citizens of Paris. In the High Court Condé thundered against the predominant influence of the proscribed Minister, and won golden opinions by his affected zeal for the public good. At the Palais Royal she used the popular favour to oppress the Regent and despoil the Crown. In the midst of his philippics against Mazarin, he privately offered Anne of Austria to consent to her favourite's return if his demands were granted. But the Cardinal, to his honour, refused to accept restoration on such terms. It would only remain, he said, to carry the Prince to Rheims and crown him King. With great public spirit, he counselled his mistress, rather than barter away the rights of

her son, to purchase the services of his arch-enemy, De Retz, even if it were necessary to instal that aspiring Prelate in his own vacant apartments at the Palais Royal, invested with the dignities of Cardinal and Prime Minister.

The Regent took counsel with the Princess Palatine, and then sending for Madame de Chevreuse and her daughter, appealed to them to assist her in destroying the object of their common hatred. These ladies, smarting from an insult that could only be washed out in blood, fell joyfully into the Regent's views, and answered for De Retz. At midnight the Coadjutor was again closeted with Anne of Austria in her little gray chamber. She offered him an immediate nomination to the conclave, and the chief place in the Ministry, if he would free her from the intolerable yoke of the Prince. At the same time she employed all the arts of feminine persuasion to engage his friendship for Mazarin. The ambitious heart of the Coadjutor leaped with joy. The splendid prize which, for so many years, had inspired his efforts and gilded his dreams was within his grasp. But the evident partiality of the Regent for her fallen favourite, and her evident reluctance to elevate his most formidable rival to his vacant seat, taught the wary prelate caution.

He saw his frank declaration that the alliance she desired was, even in her own interests, impossible, his ability to serve her resting on his antagonism to the Cardinal, fall barren upon her mind. He therefore declined for the present accepting any official position; relying upon Orleans, the Parliament, and the force of public feeling to guard him against the return of Mazarin, and upon time and opportunity to demonstrate to the Regent how indispensable to her were his own services. In order to remove the point which the vacancy in the chief post of the Administration lent to Condé's invective, he proposed that Chateauneuf should be recalled to the Council with the title of Prime Minister; and he pledged himself to Anne of Austria to ruin the Prince's popularity, and drive him from the Capital. Transported with joy at gaining such a potent ally, without sacrificing to him her exiled Minister, she replied he might consider himself Cardinal and the second of her friends. The Coadjutor was the vainest of men. Though extremely ugly, his successes among the fair sex were notorious, and no conquest seemed to him impossible. Anne of Austria was a finished coquette; and she now used her blandishments with such effect, that the intoxicated prelate seems to have

conceived the hope of supplanting Mazarin in her heart as well as in her councils. They separated, after a conference of some hours, in perfect accord, each well pleased at the result of the interview.

The new political combination remained for some time a profound secret. The Regent continued to delude the Prince with professions of regard, and of eager anxiety to satisfy his pretensions. But the Fronde assailed him vigorously in the Chambers and in the press, and exposed the hollowness of his patriotic declarations, by baring to public view the whole course of his private negotiations with the Regent. Condé, however, held his ground firmly. Beaufort, still the idol of Paris, was now his zealous adherent; Orleans, overawed by his fiery cousin, remained neutral; Molé and the wiser magistrates deprecated further dissensions in the Royal Family, and the progress of the Coadjutor halted far behind the fierce rush of the Regent's passions. She was in despair. Desperate councils, inspired by baffled vengeance, were deliberately weighed at the Palais Royal. Vitry had been created Duke and Marshal of France by Louis XIII., for assassinating the obnoxious Concini. The precedent was not forgotten. The Prince had, of late, abstained from visiting

the Court, but Marshal Hocquincourt undertook to storm his hotel in the night, and slay him if he attempted resistance. To her eternal dishonour, Anne of Austria warmly approved and encouraged this murderous project. No one could estimate better than she what likelihood there was that the warrior Prince, in his own palace, and surrounded by his retainers, would yield without a blow to the violence of midnight assassins. But De Retz, though unscrupulous and without fear, and steeped to the lips in vice, shrank from the infamy of such an enormous crime. He offered to have Condé arrested at the Luxembourg Palace, in the presence of Monsieur; and although Anne of Austria jealous and distrustful of the Lieutenant General, rejected this proposal, his remonstrances forced her, unwillingly, to abandon the scheme of assassination.

Information that designs were harboured at Court against his liberty reached the Prince, and so completely had he been fooled by the Regent's artifices, and his own egregious presumption, that his astonishment exceeded his anger. Never had he deemed himself more firmly planted in Anne of Austria's favour, never had he counted with greater certainty upon the realization of his ambitious hopes. He barricaded and garrisoned

his hotel, and, shortly afterwards, fresh rumours of the hostile intentions of his enemies catching some colour of truth from the suspicious movements of a body of the Royal Guards, he quitted Paris at break of day for his country house at St. Maur. As he lingered outside one of the city gates, with an armed party of his friends, in expectation of being joined by his brother Conti, the sharp ring of hoofs upon the stony causeway struck his ear. Thinking himself pursued, he set spurs to his horse, and never drew rein till he had reached Meudon. Laughter-loving Paris soon learned with delight how a few donkeys, driven by peasant women to early market, had scared into headlong flight the boldest warrior of the age.

Condé was joined at St. Maur by all his family, and by a great majority of the nobility then in the Capital. Emboldened by this powerful demonstration, he sent a message to the Parliament, declaring his liberty to be menaced, and requiring the dismissal of the three Under Secretaries of State, Le Tellier, Servien, and Lyonne, as being the creatures and accomplices of the still omnipotent Mazarin. Anne of Austria, divided between vexation and alarm at the unexpected popularity of her enemy, sent down to the Palace of Justice a solemn denial of his accusa-

tions. The Coadjutor thundered against the presumption of a Prince of the Blood in claiming to dictate the choice of the King's ministers. But the High Court, anxious to soothe the irritation of the Prince, issued a fresh decree against all who should hold communication with a proclaimed enemy of the realm. The Under Secretaries cowering before the storm, and deeming the cause of their patron lost, threw up their seals and retired from Court; and then Orleans, distracted by contending terrors, paid a friendly visit to his cousin at St. Maur, and persuaded him to return to Paris.

Nevertheless, the breach between Anne of Austria and Condé grew wider every day. There is little doubt that at this time he was heartily sick of faction, and honestly desirous of a reconciliation with the Regent upon terms that would afford a sufficient guarantee for the permanent exclusion of Mazarin from France. But Anne was staunch to her favourite; and the Prince, yielding to the evil counsels of his sister and her following, and to the delusive suggestions of his own inflated egotism, began to prepare for civil war. He sent his wife and son to Montrond, placed officers whom he could trust in charge of the fortresses of his governments, and dispatched

the Marquis of Sillery to Brussels to negotiate a treaty with the Archduke. These criminal steps gave the Regent an advantage which she was not slow to use. She sent a message to the High Court, formally charging the Prince with high treason. The Parliament appointed a day for the consideration of the indictment. De Retz prepared to sustain it with all his genius and all his audacity; and the vacillating Orleans promised his co-operation. On the other hand, Condé drew up a counter-declaration, asserting his innocence, and demanded Monsieur's signature to the document. Gaston, afraid to refuse, yet ashamed to comply, endeavoured to escape the difficulty by flight, and set out for the country in the early morning. But the Prince stopped his cousin's coach before it got clear of the city, and presented the paper which contained his answer to the Regent's charges. Orleans, awed into instant submission by the glance and voice of his imperious kinsman, subscribed his name without a murmur, and sought refuge in a quiet retreat until the tempest blew over.

The day appointed for the hearing of the cause was one of the most agitated in the feverish annals of the Fronde. Perhaps the classic ground by the shore of the hoarse Ægean, where

the fierce democracy of Athens exulted in its stormy life, or the equally memorable spot beneath the shadow of the Roman Forum, whose august temples were so often polluted by the strife of the faction-torn *comitia,* never witnessed a more tumultuous scene than that which on this day desecrated the Palace of Justice. The Regent and De Retz were determined to crush Condé at all hazards; he was equally prepared, if necessary, to resort to the last extremity of force. Paris was divided into hostile camps. The outer halls, the closets, and the corridors of the Palace of Justice were filled with armed men and munitions of war. The members of the High Court passed to their chamber through steel-clad ranks, burning with the rage of civil hatred; and their deliberations were disturbed by the stern murmurs and the clashing of arms that resounded from without. A chill of agonised suspense shot through the assembly, freezing the boldest hearts. Brave men were seen to tremble and turn pale, and drops of intense anguish stood upon many a stern brow, and rolled down many a furrowed cheek. Condé opened the debate with fury, denouncing the Coadjutor as the author of the calumnies by which he was assailed. De Retz replied with equal vehemence, taunting the Prince with perfidy and

ingratitude. The animosity of their followers was kindled into frenzy; the Prince laid his hand on his sword, and it seemed for a moment as if nothing could avert one of the bloodiest tragedies in the history of France. But the First President Molé, whose sublime courage enabled him alone to preserve composure throughout this terrible scene, threw himself between the hostile parties. He implored Condé by the blood of St. Louis not to defile with human sacrifices to the demon of civil discord, the temple which the good King had reared to peace and justice. He adjured the Coadjutor by his sacred office to spare the flock which Heaven had committed to his charge. These appeals, enforced by the venerable character of the great Magistrate, and by the reproaches of half-stifled reason, recalled the leaders to their senses. Condé, whose party was the stronger, immediately despatched La Rochefoucault to dismiss his armed train; and De Retz proceeded in person on a similar errand. But as the messengers of mercy were returning, having accomplished their mission, and the rival hosts were quietly dispersing, La Rochefoucault, with a disregard of good faith and prudence which only the madness of long cherished private and party animosity could inspire, caught the Prelate in the

folds of a door, and holding his body as in a vice, with the head and shoulders within and the lower extremities on the outside, called to his friends to kill the Archbishop. Luckily for De Retz, one of Condé's favourite officers interfered to rescue him from his critical position. The Parliament abruptly broke up its sitting without coming to a decision on the Regent's message.

On the following day Paris awoke, as a man awakes from a drunken debauch. Horror, shame, and remorse urged all whom faction had not bereft of the feelings of humanity, to seek an accommodation. Molé was indefatigable in the work of conciliation. The Regent, who wished for nothing so much as that the Prince and the Coadjutor should cut each other's throats, found it expedient to dissemble her feelings. In a few days the King would attain his majority, and hold a Bed of Justice to announce his assumption of sovereign power. It was agreed that on this solemn occasion, the Prince should be formally declared guiltless of high treason, pledging himself in return to renounce faction. But, even in the short period which had to elapse, new causes of irritation sprang up, which led to his absenting himself from the ceremony. Louis held his Bed of Justice with all the pomp and circumstance befitting the

august occasion of the majority of a King of France. But the elaborate magnificence of ceremonial, and the splendour of martial array only rendered the absence of his greatest subject more conspicuous. Anne of Austria, goaded beyond all endurance by this public slight, and by the terms in which it was excused, publicly declared that she or the Prince must perish. Still, however, the friends of peace, and especially the Duke of Orleans, were unceasing in their efforts to bring about an understanding. Mazarin counselled his mistress to grudge no reasonable concession which might serve to keep the Prince from revolt. But Anne of Austria hated Condé with an implacable hatred, a blending of all the vindictive emotions of an outraged sovereign and an insulted woman; and she saw in him an insuperable obstacle to the return of her Minister, which her courage impelled her to break to pieces. On the other hand Condé, taught by experience to distrust the Regent, urged on by false pride and the violent counsels of his sister's faction, and entangled in engagements with Spain, had unwillingly drifted towards civil war, till he found it well-nigh impossible to retrace his course. Retiring slowly through the province of Berri to the Castle of Montrond, he held council there with Conti,

Madame de Longueville, Nemours, La Rochefoucault, the President Viole, and the faithful Lenet, whose opinions always leant to wisdom and moderation. His mind long remained a prey to remorseful doubts before it could resolve on the fatal plunge into civil war; and when he yielded at last to the importunities of his brother and sister, it was with a mournful prophecy which time fulfilled, that they would desert him at his need. The die was cast, both sides appealed to the sword.

In reviewing the career of Condé since the peace of Munster, when he cast himself into the angry whirlpool of the Fronde, to be swept along finally into the abyss of rebellion, there are few points indeed on which the judgment can rest with even qualified approval. Ambition is an imperious instinct in the minds of men of great abilities and great energy. But ambition may be that lofty and generous sentiment, which is the natural life of genius, kindling all its glorious faculties into beneficent activity, impelling it on its sublime mission to illumine and to make smooth the dark and difficult paths of human progress. And ambition may be a sordid passion which vivifies genius with a baleful fire only to blast it, perverting it from its God-like destinies into a minister of evil, a

deformity, and a curse. After the battle of Lens, the opportunity of winning such renown as has but rarely fallen to the lot of man, opened itself to Condé. He was the hero of the age, radiant with glory. He was at once the first Prince of the Blood, and the chief of a family which had linked its name with popular interests; at once the idol of the French nobility and the pride of the House of Bourbon. All classes in France regarded him with unbounded admiration. Nature and fortune had combined, in lavish emulation, to endow him with every gift and every advantage calculated to attract confidence from all. The Government, weak and discredited, clung to him for safety; the nobles, turbulent and licentious, were prodigal of their spontaneous homage to the brilliant warrior; the Third Estate, goaded to revolt by misrule, but swayed by patriotic statesmen, equally wise, firm, and loyal, eagerly solicited his protection. Had he possessed greatness of soul commensurate with the grandeur of the opportunity, and bent his mind to the noble task of healing the disorders of the State; of consolidating yet confining within salutary limits the power of the Crown; of bridling faction, yet establishing securely the just rights of the subject; he might, in all human probability, have saved France from

a century and a half of demoralizing despotism, and from the wide waste and ruin of the great Revolution. And while securing for himself, on the legitimate basis of great public services, a commanding position in the kingdom, which neither Court intrigue nor popular caprice would have been able to overturn, he might have built himself an imperishable monument in the welfare of his country, and won from the gratitude of mankind a chaplet of fame far brighter, purer, and more enduring than the blood-stained laurels he had gathered on the field of Rocroi.

But this great work, which patriotism invited him to achieve, awoke no responsive enthusiasm in the Prince's mind, debauched by the favours of fortune. The glory of establishing a constitutional monarchy which should combine, in just measure, authority with freedom, was blazoned before his eyes by the eloquence of Molé and De Retz, without inflaming his soul. In the line of policy he pursued, his views, selfish, and therefore short-sighted, were confined within the narrow bounds of his own vulgar interests. He regarded the difficulties of the Regent, and the miseries of the people, only as materials with which the hand of faction might construct a vast edifice of personal aggrandisement. It might have been

thought that when amidst the tempest of universal odium, which his pride and violence provoked, he was hurried a captive to Vincennes, the solitude of his prison would have induced reflection, and that reflection and adversity would have revived in his breast seeds of wisdom that had withered in the blaze of cloudless prosperity. But it required far sterner trials to temper that haughty spirit, to school that turbulent heart. He left his prison to follow again a course of unworthy ambition, along which his progress could only be tracked by national calamities. The reckless audacity with which he openly pursued aims purely selfish, is a remarkable proof of the low standard of public morality in France at that period. There have lived, indeed, in France, both before and after his time, Princes of the Royal Blood whose influence overshadowed the throne. In the preceding century the dishonoured royalty of the despicable Henry III. had shrunk into insignificance in the presence of the Great League which was animated by the heroic soul of Henry of Guise. The succeeding century saw the career and fall of Phillippe Egalité. But Guise was strong, not in the strength of faction, but of the national sympathies. His confederacy was the incarnation of the spirit which stirred to

its lowest depths the heart of Catholic France, the uprising of Catholicism against the Reformation. History has consigned Egalité to eternal infamy by exhibiting him as an odious type of profligate ambition. But such, during the period of his popularity, was not the judgment of the majority of his countrymen. To the few who knew him well, indeed, he was a jaded voluptuary, who, having exhausted every other species of flagitious excitement, was driven by the cravings of a morbid appetite to seek new pleasures in revolution and regicide. But to the mass of the population he appeared, for a time, an illustrious and disinterested champion of liberty, a man of royal rank and royal nature, who, discarding in the sacred cause of humanity the prejudices of birth and the ties of blood, had voluntarily descended to the condition of a private citizen, in order better to co-operate in a movement that crushed colossal injustice, and emancipated millions from hereditary degradation. The ambition of Condé was neither lofty, like that of Guise, nor crafty like that of Egalité. It was not the sublime sentiment which draws its inspiration from a grand idea and is sanctified by a noble purpose. Neither did it seek, with care, to hide its deformity under the borrowed garb of

public virtue. It was of the earth earthy, and its native meanness was only rendered more repulsive by a thin and carelessly worn disguise. For ignoble aims, shamelessly pursued, Condé soiled his glory in the mire of faction; abased his genius, impelled by its natural instincts to soar like the eagle, in slimy paths of intrigue; cast to the winds the obligations of public principle and of private honour; and finally, in the guilty madness of credulous vanity and distempered pride, committed the last political crime in delivering up his country to civil war, and the sword of a foreign enemy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE success of Condé was equal to the justice of his cause. At first his criminal enterprise was gilded by some transient gleams of success. Leaving his family in Berri, to keep that province faithful to his interests, he proceeded with La Rochefoucault to his Government of Guienne. The Parliament and citizens of Bordeaux embraced his party with enthusiasm; the provincial magnates, who had formerly looked with coldness on the heroic efforts of his wife, mustered their vassals, and sent them to swell his ranks. The Count of Marsin, Commander of the Army of Catalonia, abandoning a province which had been occupied by the French since the time of Cardinal Richelieu, brought part of his troops to aid the insurrection. Lenet, despatched as the Prince's Ambassador to the Court of Madrid, was flattered with promises of immediate and powerful suc-

cours. In the North, the Count of Tavannes succeeded in detaching Condé's regiments from the Army of Flanders, and erected the standard of revolt upon the walls of Stenay.

But, even in the beginning, the defections from his party fatally diminished its strength and reputation. In the eyes of all Frenchmen, of those even who had grown grey in conspiring, the majority of the Sovereign lent a far graver and more sinister complexion to an act of rebellion. His brother-in-law, Longueville, whose good-natured tolerance was at length wearied out by the scandalous profligacy of his wife, and the domineering arrogance of his brother-in-law, declined to incur further risks on account of schemes in which he was not personally interested, and kept Normandy in its allegiance to the Crown. The two distinguished brothers, Bouillon and Turenne, who had been his ablest and staunchest supporters during the war of Bordeaux, fell from him. Bouillon could bring four thousand retainers into the field, and the military talents of Turenne were worth an army. Mazarin knew the value of these redoubtable chiefs; and by persuading Anne of Austria to satisfy the long-debated claims of the Duke, won them over to his party, and purchased, at a cheap price, for the

young King as splendid and loyal services as any monarchy could ever boast of. Condé's alliance with the Spaniards, which soon became public, without adding in any great degree to his material strength, weakened his cause morally in an irreparable degree. The Parliament of Paris no longer hesitated to register the King's letter, declaring him and his partizans traitors. The Parliament of Bordeaux was alienated from his interests. The Duke of Orleans broke off all relations with the proclaimed enemies of the realm.

The Regent acted with her usual courage. Taking with her the young King she joined the veteran army of the Count of Harcourt, a General of proved ability, and advanced into Berri. The people of the province received their young Monarch with joyful demonstrations; the towns threw open the gates to the royal troops, Conti, Madame de Longueville, and the Princess of Condé flying for refuge to Bordeaux. Harcourt then marched to attack Condé in Guienne. All the Prince's genius and activity was insufficient to counter-balance the inferior quality of his raw levies, or to avert from them several slight but galling defeats. Tarnished prestige, and the harsh measures, and harsher manners of their

leader, provoked disaffection among the insurgents; and public disaster was aggravated by the scandalous disorders which broke out in Condé's family, converting Bordeaux into a chaos of tumult and murder. In her journey from Berri Madame de Longueville had engaged in a liason with the Duke of Nemours, which aroused the jealous anger of La Rochefoucault. Condé prevented further mischief by despatching Nemours to take the command at Stenay. But shortly afterwards Conti, whose weak nature, ever in extremes, passed at a bound from degrading submission to frantic violence, quarrelling with his sister, openly reviled her in language that outraged common decency. The Duchess, in order to revenge herself, formed a party among the dregs of the rabble, who were called Ormistes, from their nightly gatherings beneath some large elm-trees, and urged them on to brutal excesses. Bloodshed and rapine stalked abroad through the city. Condé, already fully occupied by his military operations, strove in vain to calm these dissensions. His wife, whom the Bordelais revered and loved, brought all her influence to the support of the magistrates. Her courage and wisdom might have restored order; but, unfortunately, the delicate condition of her health compelled her to

retire from the conflict, and abandon her old asylum to the unbridled licentiousness of a ferocious mob. With his arms clouded by reverses, and his party torn by discord, Condé saw himself on the brink of ruin, from which he was only snatched by another blunder on the part of Cardinal Mazarin.

The links that bound Anne of Austria to her favourite, forged as they were of intellectual conviction as well as of affection, were of an indissoluble nature, which neither peril, nor interest, nor time, nor absence, had any power over. As with all women of resolute and wilful character, opposition and opprobrium only drove the Regent to cling more tenaciously to what she cherished. Never had the Cardinal more absolutely guided the councils or directed the movements of her Government than during his retirement at Bruhl. But he did not bear adversity well. His mind was tortured by gnawing anxiety, by jealous fears and suspicions. His letters were filled with puling lamentations and peevish reproaches, interspersed with appeals, couched in the language of high-flown sentiment, to his only too-devoted mistress, to abridge the period of his banishment. To the minds of both, her's always sanguine and fearless, his cheated out

of its habitual caution by the illusions which are born of the weary yearnings of exile, the time seemed now ripe for his return to France. The royal authority was obeyed without question over nearly the whole kingdom. The only antagonist whom they feared, banned as a public enemy, and losing ground daily in the corner of France to which he was driven, appeared to be reduced to the alternative of submission or flight. Collecting a body of troops in the Bishopric of Liege, Mazarin crossed the French frontier, joined the King and Queen-mother at Poitiers, and resumed the direction of affairs. But the explosion of public resentment which followed this rash step taught him to regret his precipitation. The Parliament of Paris, incensed at his contempt for its decrees, set a price on his head. The Parisians shouted the old war cries of faction with unabated hatred and zeal. De Retz, to whose ambitious hopes the Cardinal's return to office was a death-blow, withdrew his support and that of his party from the Government. And the Duke of Orleans, irritated into open revolt, formed an alliance with his cousin, whose factious proceedings now wore a semblance of public spirit, and assembled in the neighbourhood of Paris a well-trained army, of which he entrusted the command to the Duke of

Beaufort. Beaufort was soon joined by his brother-in-law, the Duke of Nemours, at the head of Condé's veteran regiments from Stenay and a body of Spaniards; and the combined forces advanced towards the Loire, into the region where the rich appanages of Monsieur lay.

Had either of the Generals possessed military talent the position of the Court would have been perilous in the extreme. But not only were they both totally incompetent, but their councils were distracted by diverging purposes and private animosity. Nemours wished to march to the relief of Montrond, to which the Royalists had laid siege; Beaufort had orders to protect the territories of the Duke of Orleans. Cardinal Mazarin had placed Turenne at the head of the King's army around Poitiers, though only in joint command with Marshal Hocquincourt, and his genius so well supplied the disparity of strength that the excellent quality and superior numbers of the rebel forces barely saved them from destruction. As it was, the insurgents were reduced to inaction, while Angers, Tours, and Blois fell before their eyes; and the Royal Commanders advanced against Orleans, the chief and only remaining town of Monsieur. The danger in which he saw himself of being stripped of all his possessions,

completely paralysed the energies of that feeble Prince. Instead of showing himself at the head of his disheartened troops, and confirming, by his presence, the wavering fidelity of the citizens of Orleans, he betook himself to bed in a fit of irresolution. But his daughter by his first marriage, Mdlle. de Montpensier, boldly came forward to defend her father's interests.

This celebrated lady was now about twenty-five years old. Flattery never endowed her with beauty. Her detractors averred that the *brusquerie* of her manners was strongly dashed with impertinence. Her inordinate vanity was constantly shooting forth in strange eccentricities of speech and action; and was prone to avenge itself on superior merit in her own sex by shafts of ridicule, occasionally tipped with the poison of feminine malignancy. But she possessed a daring soul, generous impulses, a strong will, and considerable talent. Having inherited through her mother the vast possessions of the Ducal House of Montpensier, she was the richest heiress of the age, and her hand was an object of ambition even to Kings. Indeed, the chief cause of her undissembled ill-humour with the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin was, that they had frustrated more than one matrimonial alliance on which she had set her

heart, deeming it contrary to the interests of the State that her vast estates should pass under the control of a foreign Prince. Charles II. of England, while in exile at the French Court, figured among her suitors. But it is difficult indeed to discover any promise of the "Merry Monarch," whose graceful bow, ready wit, and flowing courtesy were the crowning charm of one of the most brilliant courts of modern Europe, in the gloomy and bashful youth, to whom the language of gallantry, or even of compliment, seemed unknown. Perhaps the part of the impassioned lover was not easy with the "grande Mademoiselle." At all events she seems to have looked on him as a sort of delicate monster, recording with special interest his voracious onslaught upon a joint of mutton. The needy and harsh-featured wanderer was not to the taste of the high-spirited Princess. She appears at this time to have cherished the hope which, notwithstanding a great disparity of age, Anne of Austria and the Cardinal encouraged, of ascending the throne of France as the bride of Louis XIV. Her secret partialities had long been with Condé. She lets it be seen in her curious, though insufferably egotistical memoirs, that she would willingly have married him in the event of his wife's death; and

she ever displays towards that noble woman a peculiar vindictiveness. After withering until the late autumn of her life in thorny virginity, Mdlle. de Montpensier gave her hand in secret nuptials to the Count of Lauzun, so famous for his escapades at the Court of the Great King, and the gallant services he rendered to Mary of Modena and her ill-starred husband; and she was compelled to atone for her mature indiscretion by granting the reversion of her enormous property to the French Crown.

Mademoiselle arrived at the camp of Beaufort and Nemours to find the army disorganised by the dissensions of its leaders. These noblemen were so inflamed against each other that they came to blows in her presence, and though she succeeded in composing the quarrel for the time, their smouldering resentments afterwards leaped up into a fratricidal duel, in which Nemours was killed. Escorted by her ladies, she boldly presented herself at one of the gates of Orleans and demanded admittance, just as an envoy from the King had arrived at the opposite entrance to summon the town. The magistrates were divided in opinion, and refused to receive either party. Mademoiselle stormed and cajoled to no purpose, the officer in charge of the gate replying to her objurgations

only with profound bows. But while she was allowing her anger to evaporate in a solitary stroll along the bank of the river, some of the boatmen, crowding round her, pointed out a barricaded sally-port, looking on the quay, in which a breach might easily be effected. At her instigation they made an opening, through which they dragged and pushed her and two of her ladies into the town. The populace, yelling with enthusiasm, carried her in triumph, all be-draggled and partially disarrayed, but delighted with the adventure, to the Hotel de Ville, where she terrified the magistrates into submission. By this achievement, which, half heroic, half ludicrous, well reflected the character of the heroine, Mademoiselle de Montpensier preserved the city of Orleans for her father.

While Condé was painfully battling with the difficulties which beset him in Guienne, news reached him of the dissensions of Beaufort and Nemours, and the critical situation of their army. He felt that should this veteran force, which was the main-stay of the insurgent cause, melt away or be destroyed, the loss would be irreparable; and his intelligence left him no room for doubt with regard to the critical position to which it was reduced by the divisions and the incompetency of

its chiefs. His presence alone could save it from dissolution. It was a desperate crisis; but great actions are born of great difficulties, and the Prince now conceived one of the boldest enterprises that ever occurred to a leader. This was to traverse one hundred and twenty leagues of hostile territory, swarming with vigilant foes, guarded along all its routes by strong towns and fortresses, intersected by broad and rapid rivers, the bridges and fords of which were in the hands of enemies, and, penetrating Turenne's lines, to put himself at the head of the Army of the Loire. Recognition would involve certain captivity or death, and his person was so well known, especially at the Court, which lay in his track, that the least suspicion of his journey must infallibly lead to discovery. The most profound secresy, the greatest celerity, and rare good fortune were necessary for success. The conduct of the expedition was confided to the skilful audacity and the infinite resource of Gourville.

The Prince committed the command in Guienne to his brother Conti, leaving him the Count of Marsin and the able Lenet as assistants, and set out on the evening of Palm Sunday, 1652, in the habit of a courier. He was accompanied by La Rochefoucault, by the young Prince of Marsillac,

a boy of fifteen, by Gourville, and by three other gentlemen, all wearing disguises. They travelled day and night, avoiding as much as possible the high roads, never halting longer than two hours at a time for rest and food, and never changing horses unless when compelled by absolute necessity. The hair-breadth escapes, and the laughable incidents which chequered the journey, continued long afterwards on winter evenings to furnish food for wonder and mirth at provincial firesides. By a bold stratagem Gourville obtained possession of one of the boats at a ferry on the Dordogne, and the party crossed over without incurring the risk of inconvenient questions or scrutiny. Coming to a halt at a little out-of-the-way hostelry, the Prince was glad to escape with no other injury than bitter taunts and curses from the quick-tempered inn-keeper, who was enraged by the awkward way in which the pretended courier obeyed an order to bridle a horse. In another little village Condé was jeered by a justly incensed landlady, for letting an omelet, which he had rashly volunteered to cook, fall into the fire. She let him off with a shower of derisive compliments, in consideration of the sound rating administered to him by Gourville. One day a countryman recognised Condé, and called out his name, but the

cool impudence of the imperturbable Gourville cheated the bewildered rustic into disbelief of his own senses. Another day the party was hospitably entertained by a gentleman who, unconscious of the quality of his guests, retailed for their amusement all the current scandal and popular jests on the subject of Madame de Longueville's notorious gallantries. They crossed the Loire in a boat, which landed them, by some misadventure, at the very gates of La Charité, a strong fortress commanded by Bussy Rabutin, whom some real or fancied injuries had changed from a staunch adherent to a bitter foe of the Prince. Condé and Gourville riding forward, without hesitation, accosted the officer on guard, passed themselves off as comrades in arms, who having outstayed their leave were hurrying to rejoin their regiments, and, leaving affectionate messages for their friend Rabutin, pursued their journey unimpeded, under the walls of the town. A still greater danger befell the adventurers as they approached the Royal Camp. Being under the necessity of venturing upon the high road, one of their number, the Count of Guitaut, was recognised by a courier from the Court. By this time men and horses were completely exhausted, the Prince's iron frame alone being able to endure

the constant watching and fatigue. Young Marsillac had fainted several times, and during the later stages of the expedition had been unable to sit on horseback without assistance. The only chance of safety lay in separating into smaller bodies. Condé, La Rochefoucault, and Marsillac kept together. Turning their horses loose, they crept along stealthily, within a few paces of each other, seeking cover in ditches and patches of vegetation, until they reached the chateau of the Duchess of Chatillon, the sight of which, recalling the recent death of his adoring mother within its walls, must have awakened painful regrets in the Prince's mind. They passed the night in the chateau, surrounded by detachments of the enemy, and the following day, eluding the pursuit of the numerous parties sent out to capture them, presented themselves in safety at the headquarters of Beaufort and Nemours.

Mazarin, equally unwilling to put a slight upon the long and distinguished services of Hocquincourt, and to lose the military talents of Turenne, had unwisely divided the Royal Army into two bodies, and given to each of the Marshals an independent command. Turenne's troops were quartered around Gien, where the Court resided. Hocquincourt had pitched his camp a few leagues

in advance, near Bleneau, and, despising the incapacity of his opponents, had taken little care to secure his position. On the night following Condé's arrival Turenne was aroused from sleep by the distant tumult of battle in the direction of Bleneau. Starting up, he rushed into the open air and gained an eminence that commanded an extensive view. The camp of Hocquincourt was wrapped in flames, and the light of the conflagration fell on disorderly masses of troops, flying in hopeless rout before the furious attacks of the insurgents. Turenne gazed for a moment in silent amazement on the disastrous spectacle, and then, turning to his officers, said—"The Prince must have arrived." The great warrior recognised the presence of kindred genius in that scene of discomfiture and terror. But the peril of the situation left the Marshal little time for reflection. No one knew so well as he the ardour, sometimes amounting to rashness, with which Condé followed up an advantage. The King and Queen reposed in complete unconsciousness of danger at Gien, while there only remained his own small army to shield them from captivity. He was equal to the emergency. Pushing forward, with extraordinary boldness, the four or five thousand men under his command into a

position partly covered by woods, which concealed his weakness, he vigorously repelled the advance of the victorious enemy. Condé's eagle glance was for once at fault. A great part of his army, corrupted by lax discipline, had dispersed for plunder; and, fearful of falling into an ambuscade, after one somewhat feeble attack, he halted his men in order to allow time for the stragglers to rejoin their ranks. The hours thus wasted enabled Hocquincourt to rally his beaten division, and bring it up to the support of his colleague. Turenne, no longer fearing to be crushed, confidently awaited the enemy in his strong position, which his antagonist, having discovered his error too late, did not now venture to assail. And thus, on this extraordinary day, the fiery Condé lost, through want of daring, the opportunity which he had purchased by such prodigies of hardihood and endurance, of rendering himself master of France by a single blow; and the cautious Turenne "replaced," to use the words of Anne of Austria, "the crown on the head of her son" by a manœuvre, the success of which could not redeem it in the eyes of such a friendly critic as Napoleon from the fault of excessive rashness.

After this exploit, so brilliant even in its partial failure, Condé taking with him the Dukes of

Beaufort, Nemours, and La Rochefoucault, and leaving the command of the army to the Counts of Tavannes and Vallon, two officers who enjoyed his confidence, set out for Paris, where his interests urgently demanded his presence.

His first few weeks' experience in Guienne had rudely dispelled the vainglorious illusions with which the Prince had entered upon the civil war. His military genius, with the advantages of the most splendid prestige, and the most powerful following of any subject in Europe, and of alliance with Spain, could not avert disgraceful defeat in a struggle for personal ends, which rallied the patriotism and loyalty of France around the throne of his young Sovereign. The selfish impatience which precipitated Cardinal Mazarin's return to France, in defiance of law and of public opinion had, by partially relieving the ill-judged enterprise of Condé from the crushing odium of wanton rebellion, and by raising up for him unexpected allies, rescued him from destruction. But Condé felt that he could only make a successful stand against legitimate authority by a cordial union with the Duke of Orleans, who possessed the confidence of the middle classes, especially in the Capital; and by winning the countenance of the Parliament of Paris, which, though it had placed

a price on Mazarin's head, upheld the King's decree against himself and his partizans. In accomplishing these purposes he had to vanquish the opposition of an enemy as skilful and more determined than Mazarin himself.

De Retz had now succeeded his uncle as Archbishop of Paris. When Mazarin's sudden reappearance at Court dashed the long-desired and scarcely tasted cup of power from his lips, the Archbishop had betaken himself again to the government of his diocese, the rage and despair of baffled ambition consuming his haughty soul. But his animosity towards his Italian rival, intense as it was, paled before his hatred and distrust of Condé. Though he used all his arts to alienate the Duke of Orleans from the Queen, he was not less eager in dissuading the Duke from an alliance with the Prince. He strove to reconstruct out of the remnant of the Fronde that still adhered to him, and the Parliament and citizens of Paris, a constitutional party, under the nominal leadership of Orleans, which opposing Mazarin and Condé, irresponsible despotism, and selfish faction, would maintain the Royal authority as limited by the Declaration of the 24th of October. But this combination, which, though it may have had its root in

his personal ambition, was worthy of the enlightened genius of De Retz, and was consistent with the general scope of his policy from the beginning, failed, notwithstanding that it attracted the cordial sympathies of Molé and his friends, on account of the lack of public spirit in the country; the weakness of Monsieur, the selfish pride of the nobles, the selfish timidity of the burghers, and the demoralization of the populace. De Retz then withdrew himself almost completely from active participation in politics, only appearing from time to time to assist the Magistrates in preserving order. While Condé was still in Guyenne, feeling the necessity of destroying an influence so prejudicial to his cause in Paris, he had commissioned Gourville to carry off the Archbishop from his palace, and deliver him up to the Spaniards. Gourville laid his plans with his usual audacity and skill, but the enterprise, so congenial to his temper, miscarried at the last moment through an accident, and he had to fly for his life. After this narrow escape, and while the political fortunes of De Retz were seemingly at their lowest ebb, by one of those strange turns of destiny visible throughout his eventful career, the great prize which all his life he had laboured in vain to secure, fell to him unasked for, and when it had probably

passed beyond the range of his hopes. The Regent had requited his services against Condé, during Mazarin's absence at Bruhl, by a nomination for a Cardinal's hat. After her favourite's return, she sent to Rome to cancel the appointment. The Pope, however, at the next creation of Cardinals, elevated De Retz to a seat in the conclave. It was through the spontaneous act of the Pontiff that the baffled demagogue and discarded Minister acquired the dignity he so greatly coveted of Prince of the Church, and the appellation under which he is famous to all time.

Condé's presence in the Capital gave him complete sway, for the time, over the mind of his volatile cousin. The confederate Princes, in order to conciliate the favour of the Parliament, issued a Declaration setting forth, in the language of exalted patriotism, that having taken up arms solely to free the realm from the evil rule of a foreign Minister, they were ready to disband their troops when he, in obedience to the edict of the High Court, retired from France. But Molé and his colleagues, being well-informed of the close relations subsisting between the rebel chiefs and the Spanish Army, then ravaging the northern provinces, and also of the private negotiations with Mazarin which Condé was at that very

moment carrying on through the Duchess of Chatillon, treated this specious manifesto with the contempt it merited, and publicly reproached its authors with their treason and perfidy. The Princes, stung by these just denunciations, resorted to intimidation. Wielding with unskilful hands the dangerous weapons of De Retz, they excited the rabble against the Magistrates, and being unable to curb the demon they had raised, the city fell under the reign of lawless violence.

In this unprosperous state of his affairs, death deprived Condé of his ablest councillor, the celebrated Chavigny. This eminent politician, the favourite pupil of Richelieu, having been long condemned to obscurity by the hatred of Anne of Austria and the jealousy of Mazarin, had lately become the chief adviser of the Prince. At the time of his decease he was busy with a project which redounded little to the credit of his patron. News having arrived in Paris that the Princess of Condé was fast sinking under a mortal illness at Bordeaux, neither esteem for her virtues nor gratitude for her services restrained her husband from an indecent exhibition of joy at the prospect of being released from ties that had always galled him; and he immediately commissioned Chavigny to arrange for his second nuptials with Made-

moiselle de Montpensier. But the Princess, having given birth to a son, and having lingered long between life and death, began slowly to mend, to the intense vexation of her lord, and the intense delight of the faithful Gascons. Little could these generous hearts divine how cruel was the fate which then snatched their heroine from the grave.

Whilst abortive political and matrimonial intrigues distracted Condé's attention from military operations, Tavannes and Vallon, out-generalled and beaten by Turenne, now in supreme command of the Royal Army, found themselves shut up, with diminished forces, in the town of Etampes, and reduced to the last extremity. In compliance with urgent demands for assistance from the rebel Princes, their Spanish allies prevailed on the Duke of Lorraine, by the payment of a large subsidy, to march his army—all that remained to him of the rich territory of which he was Sovereign—into the heart of France. This seasonable diversion extricated the insurgents; uniting with the soldiers of Lorraine they retired on Paris, closely followed by Turenne.

A trial of strategical skill followed, in which the Royal commander, though inferior in strength, baffled all the efforts of the confederates to crush him; and then the needy Duke of Lorraine, moved

by the golden arguments of Mazarin, suddenly retired over the frontier, leaving his allies to shift for themselves.

The rebel army, now reduced to about five thousand men, was exposed by this desertion to be overwhelmed at St. Cloud by the simultaneous attacks of Turenne and Marshal la Ferté, who had marched to Turenne's assistance from the borders of Flanders; and Condé went forth again to lead it through the city to a safer position at Charenton. But the municipal authorities, who were loyal to the King and justly indignant at the frightful disorders which mocked their rule, with the aid of De Retz, prevailed on the unstable Orleans to allow the gates to be shut against his cousin. The Prince, thus caught in a trap, endeavoured in the short night of the 1st July, 1652, to draw off his men under the shadow of the city walls. But he was unable to elude the unsleeping vigilance of Turenne; and when, at break of day, he reached the Faubourg St. Antoine, his rear was so hotly pressed by overwhelming numbers that he was compelled to halt and give battle.

Three streets forming the Faubourg converged upon an open space before the Gate St. Antoine. These he caused to be closed with barricades and such entrenchments as could be hastily thrown

up, and committed their defence to Nemours, Tavannes, and Vallon. La Rochefoucault and a chosen body of gentlemen remained with their leader as a reserve, ready to rush upon the enemy wherever succour was most needed. The rear of the insurgents rested on the city gate, jealously barred and guarded against them, and the gloomy walls of the Bastille. On his side Turenne made his dispositions for the attack with his usual promptitude and ability. But this great General rated too highly the merits of his old commander to throw away any chance of success in conflict with such an antagonist; he, therefore, wished to delay the assault until La Ferté had come up with the heavy artillery. The young King and Mazarin, however, had taken their station on the heights of Charonne overlooking the battle-field, and impatient to witness the destruction of the illustrious rebel, sent message after message to the illustrious Marshal, urging immediate action. The walls, towers, and steeples of the city were alive with swarming multitudes, whose gaze was rivetted by a terrible fascination on the bloody tragedy that soon began to unfold itself beneath.

The battle was one of the fiercest and most stubborn in the annals of war. The Royal troops, confident in an overwhelming superiority of force,

and eager to distinguish themselves under the eyes of their young Monarch, attacked in three columns with extraordinary impetuosity. The insurgents, feeling that their only hope of safety lay in their valour, disputed every inch of ground with the most determined resolution. Nemours, Tavannes, and Vallon fought on the barricades at the head of their men. La Rochefoucault surpassed even the splendid gallantry which had rendered the ruined defences of Bordeaux impregnable. Condé himself, in his fury and his prowess seemed more than mortal; the living image of the God of War, as depicted more than two thousand years before in immortal verse by the greatest of poets. His terrible countenance, flaming with the fierce joy of conflict, his voice rolling in thunder along the ranks of battle, and the lightning strokes of his sword carried dismay into the enemy in every part of the field. The rapidity of movement by which he multiplied himself at the points of danger appeared superhuman. "Did you see the Prince of Condé on that day?" was afterwards asked of Turenne. "I did not see one Prince of Condé," replied the Marshal; "I saw more than twelve." The carnage was horrible. The combat raged from house to house, from story to story, from early

morning till noon. At mid-day both armies, exhausted by fatigue and the intense heat, were compelled to desist for a brief interval of repose. But, although the fate of the engagement was still undecided, the superior numbers and *matériel* of the King's army had told with fearful effect on the insurgents. Turenne's guns had crushed and levelled their feebled defences, and, sweeping the streets with an iron tempest, had made sad havoc in their ranks. Half the Prince's soldiers, and nearly all their leaders, had fallen. La Rochefoucault's cheeks were pierced by a musket ball. Nemours and Vallon were carried from the field desperately wounded. Condé, though his armour was dented with blows, remained unscathed. In the middle of the fight, being almost suffocated by the heat, he had caused himself to be disarmed and undressed, rolled himself over and over in an adjacent field, and then, refreshed and invigorated by the touch of his mother earth, had returned like a Titan to sustain his fainting ranks. Slowly recoiling before the ever-increasing masses of the Royalists, he took advantage of the pause to disengage his remaining troops from the smoking ruins of the Faubourg; and, drawing them up in a compact body before the city gate, he awaited the

approach of his foes with the calm courage of despair. Turenne, having been reinforced by the fresh army and powerful artillery of La Ferté, prepared to deliver the decisive blow which should end the civil war. But in this moment of dreadful suspense, a young and high-born woman, alighting upon the scene like some goddess in a Homeric battle, robbed the Royalists of a certain triumph and snatched the Prince from inevitable destruction.

On Condé's departure from Paris, the Duke of Beaufort had remained behind, and though unable to defeat the hostile measures of the municipal authorities, remained true to his friend. As the sounds of battle came floating into the city; as the emotions of admiration and pity for over-matched heroism that thrilled the spectators, who crowded every turret and pinnacle, flashed with electric sympathy through the multitudes below; as the ghastly heaps of the wounded piled up against the city gate rose higher and more hideous, the popular ferment burst forth in tumult, and Beaufort, exerting on behalf of his hard pressed associates the rough eloquence which was his only talent, inflamed by stirring harangues the passions of the populace. The popular clamour compelled the municipal authorities to

allow the wounded to be carried within the walls, and the tears and prayers of these brave men, who, unmindful of their own sufferings, implored succour for their gallant comrades, kindled the public agitation into fury. Mademoiselle de Montpensier boldly seized the opportunity to save her cousin. She first wrung from the fears and the compassion of her irresolute father a written order to the Governor of the Bastille to obey her directions. Then proceeding amidst the acclamations of a vast multitude to the Hotel de Ville, partly by coaxing, partly by threats of personal violence, she extorted from old Marshal l'Hopital, Governor of Paris, and the Provost of the Merchants, an order to the officer in command at the Gate St. Antoine to admit the rebel army. Enchanted with her success, she hurried on foot to the scene of battle. Her way lay along the street St. Antoine, which was choked by the mournful procession of the dying and the dead. At every step gaping wounds appalled her sight, cries of agony assailed her ears, the pallid anguish of some familiar face smote her heart. She met La Rochefoucault, blinded and insensible, borne along in the arms of his son and of Gourville. She met Vallon, almost expiring in a litter, who called out to her in feeble tones that all was lost; and

Guitaut, faint with loss of blood, reeling on his horse like a drunken man. Repairing to a house near the ramparts, she sent to the Prince to come and see her. He was standing at a short distance from the gate, calmly watching the slowly advancing columns of Turenne, the gathering thunder cloud of war that was about to burst in ruin on his head. His face was hardly to be recognised under its hideous mask of clotted dust and blood, and the long matted locks that hung about it in wild disorder; his shirt and collar were smeared with gore, and in his hand was a naked sword, of which he had flung away the scabbard. On seeing the Princess he sank upon a seat and burst into tears. "Pardon my grief," he said to her; "I have lost all my friends." She soothed him with words of comfort, ordered the Gate St. Antoine to be thrown open, and the guns of the Bastille to check Turenne's advance. Condé, disdaining to retreat in broad day before Mazarin, held his ground until nightfall, and then retired unmolested within the walls. The astonishment of the Regent and the Minister at the escape of their great enemy was only equalled by their indignation. The Cardinal had hitherto favoured Mademoiselle de Montpensier's aspiring project to become the bride of Louis XIV., thinking it

good policy to attach her immense possessions to the French Crown. But when he learned that she had ordered the cannon of the Bastille to play upon the King's army, he exclaimed, with a fixed resolve which nothing was able ever afterwards to shake, "She has killed her husband."

The presence of his troops within its walls rendered Condé master of Paris. But the majority of the High Court, nothing daunted, freely expressed their disapproval of the weak compliances of Marshal l'Hopital and the Provost of the Merchants, to which he owed his safety. The Prince, soured and rendered reckless by his reverses, retaliated by hounding on his soldiers and the rabble against the Chambers. He was unable to control the fiendish passions he had let loose, and the city was again delivered up to a saturnalia of crime, to pillage, murder, and conflagration. The savage rioters attacked the Palace of Justice with fire and sword, and it was by a miracle that the blazing building did not become the funeral pyre of the slaughtered Magistrates. Hundreds of the citizens were butchered in the face of day. The High Court suspended its sittings. Molé and his leading colleagues fled from a scene in which law and order were trampled in the dust by a licentious

soldiery, and many of the principal inhabitants followed their example. The beleaguering army of Turenne, cutting off the regular supplies of provisions, famine came to glut itself with victims whom violence had spared, and pestilence swept away crowds of spectral wretches already wasted by hunger. The unhappy Parisians, all but the dregs of the population, the vultures of society who feast amidst carnage and desolation, feeling that the rankest despotism could not corrupt into evils more dreadful than those deadly fruits of unbridled license, sighed for the restoration of the Royal authority. Every day the insurgent cause sank lower and lower. It was to little purpose that the Duke of Lorraine, having literally fulfilled his engagement with Mazarin by marching out of France, marched back again, and compelled Turenne to raise the siege of the Capital. Tavannes and Vallon led out the Prince's troops to co-operate with the troops of Lorraine. But although the Royalist General, knowing with whom he had to deal, did not hesitate to place his small army in exposed positions, his incompetent antagonists failed to seize the opportunities he afforded them. Condé, eaten up by anguish and remorse for the downfal of his party, and the miseries caused by his guilty

ambition, and worn by incessant toils, had succumbed to a dangerous fever. He was only able to vent his impotent rage by shouting from his sick bed, "Give bridles to Tavannes and Vallon; they are asses." At the termination of a fruitless campaign the Duke of Lorraine again retreated across the frontier; and, to add to Condé's misfortunes, his impregnable fortress of Montrond, after holding out for a year, was reduced by famine. The astute Mazarin, seeing the Fronde at the last extremity, dealt it its death blow by voluntarily retiring a second time into exile. The more uncompromising members of the Parliament, who had remained in the Capital after the departure of their First President, immediately declared for the King, and drew after them the whole body of substantial citizens. The chiefs of the insurrection, in the blind haste of selfish fear, opened separate negotiations with the Court. Anne of Austria temporised, until terror and distrust had broken up the party. Then, assuming a haughtier tone, she announced that the season of concession was over, that she required unconditional submission. In truth there only remained the desperate alternative of repairing to the Spanish Camp.

It will be obvious, even from this feeble sketch

of the rise and fall of the Fronde, that it contained in itself, from the very beginning, the seeds of its own destruction. There is no record in history of a struggle of equal moment, one involving such mighty interests, such stupendous results, and sustained by the utmost energies of so many men and women endowed with most glorious gifts of nature, in which so little can be found to inspire the fancy, satisfy the judgment, or elevate the heart. It was, as regards the vast majority of those who took part in it, a war of mean passions for mean objects, relieved indeed by many brilliant, many amusing, and by some admirable incidents; episodes dearly purchased by the general degradation of genius, courage, and beauty. What most strikes the mind contemplating the strife of the Fronde, is an absence of moral grandeur. It did not even contain any grand element of terror. It wanted even the dignity of colossal crime. We see a strange drama in which feeble tragedy and broad farce are fantastically interwoven; in which horrors, bordering on the ludicrous, give place, with startling rapidity, to more ghastly mirth; terror with little of sublimity, and humour degenerating into satanic ribaldry. One thing alone in the shifting chaos of fickle passions and

grotesque incidents, of vice and madness, appears permanent. This is an all-pervading spirit of selfishness; the principle of disorder, which quickened, and, by quickening, gradually destroyed, the elements of social confusion. Grasping Princes and nobles, aided by turbulent demagogues, taking advantage of popular discontent and of a long minority, seek to strip newly dowered royalty for their own aggrandisement; an alien Minister, under the pretext of defending the rights of the Crown, strives with equal avidity to clutch undivided authority, and enormous wealth, shamefully pilfered from an exhausted exchequer and a famishing people.

But in intimate alliance with, and partly concealed by, the play of base and frivolous passions, an issue of the last consequence to France and to Europe was fought out with a singleness of purpose, a strength of conviction, and a steadfast courage worthy of its magnitude. Mathieu Molé strove to win and to preserve inviolate a charter of public rights; and Anne of Austria strove to maintain the absolute prerogative inherited by her son.

When France, depressed by a long series of disasters, surrendered to Charles VII. the right of taxing the Third Estate without its consent, she

enabled her Sovereigns, by pursuing a policy as crafty as it was patient and tenacious, gradually to destroy every authority in the realm, independent of their own. They raised up barriers of privilege between the different orders which, till the close of the 14th century, had been accustomed to meet frequently, on an equal footing, in national assemblies for the discussion and the regulation of public affairs; and having rendered co-operation on the ground of common interests impossible, they in the end reduced each order to absolute subjection. The nobles, exempted from the burthens of the State, and monopolising its honours and dignities, from being an aristocracy stiffened into a caste, and ceasing to share the motives and feelings completely lost their hold upon the mass of the population. Privileged but isolated, they were easily crushed by open attack, or allured to Court, saw their hereditary jurisdiction silently transferred to functionaries of the Crown. The cultivators of the soil, oppressed by imposts, not only arbitrary and capricious in themselves, but rendered insufferably galling by a vicious system of collection, looked with envy and hatred on their rich, untaxed lords, who, without affording them protection, increased their miseries by a harsh exaction of feudal services. Such of

the peasants as were fortunate enough to acquire a competence, took refuge in the nearest town under the shelter of municipal institutions, and, if possible, purchased some privileged office which separated them completely from their former life. But the towns also had been gradually despoiled of their ancient freedom. Louis XI. had made relentless war upon them, and most of his successors looked with a jealous eye upon their remaining powers and franchises. At the time of Cardinal Richelieu's death, the Royal authority had emancipated itself from all constitutional control—at least, in the *pays d'election*, which formed three parts of the kingdom—except whatever feeble restraint might exist in the privilege of humble remonstrance before registering the King's edicts, which the Minister left to the Parliament of Paris. The liberty of all French subjects, the property of the middle and lower classes, lay completely at the mercy of the Crown. To make security of person and of goods the birthright of every Frenchman—a right of the subject which has always been regarded in free communities as a necessary condition of good government and national prosperity—and to constitute an independent and vigilant guardian of this right by vindicating for the Parliament of

Paris its ancient claims to discuss freely and to reject, if they were illegal or oppressive, the King's edicts, were Molé's objects. Never, perhaps, did a public man labour for more worthy aims with truer patriotism or more heroic courage. He was not, indeed, exempt from the prejudices of his time and office, or from narrow partialities for his order. He desired all that he did to extend and elevate the functions of the High Court beyond all authenticated precedent; and therefore he regarded the States General with as much jealousy and dislike as Anne of Austria herself. But in the circumstances of the time it might well have seemed to him that this professional spirit was the highest public spirit. The nobles, having selfishly betrayed the Third Estate, had for long past evinced only a disposition to profit by the injustice under which it suffered. The beneficed clergy and the ecclesiastical corporations enjoyed the same privileges as the nobles. The somewhat cumbrous machinery of the States General having long been discarded from ordinary use in political life; and having, when tried in extraordinary emergencies, proved impotent to effect reform, chiefly because the privileged being separated from the unprivileged classes, not only by a sharply defined

line of distinction, but by the absence of common interests and common sympathies, the King could venture to treat the national remonstrances with neglect; the only hope of securing juster measure for the Third Estate, without a revolution, might well have appeared to lie in investing the Parliament with a power of control.

Molé, however, committed the error of a generous and courageous mind in attempting to accomplish a political reformation with inadequate means. To set limits to the prerogative of the Crown was a task above the strength of the Parliament of Paris. This was clear to De Retz, a man of far less pure and lofty character than the First President, but possessing an intellect incomparably more powerful, enlarged, and versatile. Inspired chiefly, no doubt, by personal ambition, but also in a spirit of enlightened statesmanship, De Retz conceived the design of bringing the aspiring genius of Condé, the military turbulence of the depressed nobles, the discontent of the citizens, and the passions of the populace into an irresistible, however ephemeral, movement which might compel concession by the Regent of the demands of the Parliament of Paris, and bear himself on its crest to the direction of the reformed Government.

The political duel between De Retz and Mazarin, one of the most interesting in history, was not merely a strife of rival ambitions. It was also a conflict of rival principles, and it involved the issue whether an absolute or a limited Monarchy was to be established in France. The champions were not unequally matched. Each was weighted with scandalous vices that sunk him in public esteem. The Coadjutor had a more splendid and daring genius, a more exact knowledge of the condition and the wants of all classes of society, a better cause, and the public favour; but the confederacy on which he leant, although brilliant and formidable, and a miracle of political skill, was built upon sand. Mazarin excelled in patient astuteness, had at command almost unlimited means of corruption in the patronage and revenues of the State, rested on the support of established power, the venerable name of a King, and the devoted attachment of one of the ablest and most resolute Princesses that ever held a sceptre. Mazarin—after many defeats, and what appeared to be utter discomfiture—finally triumphed, in consequence of the political atheism of the aristocratical party and its chief. The few nobles who were guided by any principle sought to recover their ancient power while

retaining their recent privileges, to change the Monarchy into an oligarchy; but the great majority of them were merely impelled by a spirit of rapine to plunder the State. And the conduct of Condé—who alone was in a position to curb their excesses, and even to give a patriotic direction to their energies—was conspicuous for the absence of public virtue, of statesman-like sagacity and self-control, and even of private honour. Without having the excuse of his followers for plunging into faction, for he had been gorged by the Regent with honours and offices, he sanctioned their most flagitious acts of treason towards the nation and of disloyalty towards each other by his own proceedings. Now betraying the land to the armies of Spain and the seditious license of their adherents, now lending Mazarin their swords, in return for deceitful concessions, to rivet the yoke of misgovernment, Condé and his party were content to ruin the State so that they were enriched from its spoils.

But no man nor party, no matter how richly endowed with genius and advantages of fortune can achieve permanent success by pursuing aims nakedly selfish. The personal views must be, partially at least, hidden in the shadow of some broad principle which commands the assent of the

national intelligence; or must be linked with some general interest, or some powerful sentiment that throbs with a strong pulsation in the heart of the masses. Of this truth the party of the New Fronde and their leader seemed unconscious. And each of them sought his own advantage, not only without regard to the public welfare, but without regard to the welfare of his confederates. There was no real principle of cohesion among them. They scoffed at the ties of faith and honour. Fidelity to his associates or treachery depended with each, mainly, upon his immediate inclination or interest. The consequence was that mutual distrust and the distrust of the country sapped the strength of the party. Perhaps no body of men ever possessed in a more eminent degree the talents and the courage that ordinarily command success, than the French nobles of that time. They numbered in their ranks men of the highest capacity for civil affairs. In splendid military qualities they have never been excelled. Omitting from the comparison Napoleon, who was by parentage, temperament, and all but the mere accident of conquest an Italian, and who stands apart in history, with Hannibal and Julius Cæsar, high above common rivalry, the twenty years of warfare that followed the Revolution of 1789, during

which the French armies over-ran Europe, and the martial energies and ambition, not only of every Frenchman, but of every man in the countries subject to France, were stirred into the highest emulation, not only by a vehement spirit of revolutionary propagandism, but by the great prizes in the career of arms, even kingdoms, thrown open to all, did not produce as many Generals of extraordinary merit as were found among the French Princes and nobles in the single reign of Louis XIV. Hoche, Moreau, Massena, Kleber, perhaps Dumouriez, though illustrious names, pale their light before the brighter glories of Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Vendôme, Villars, three of them, and those the greatest, old chiefs of the Fronde; while Harcourt, Catinat, Boufflers, and many others scarcely inferior in renown, might boast achievements which well compare with the deeds of the crowd of Republican Generals and Imperial Marshals. Even when the noblesse had greatly degenerated, it supplied the two most remarkable Frenchmen of the Revolutionary period, Mirabeau and Talleyrand. But intellect and courage without faith or virtue cannot long contend successfully against the accumulating moral force of public reprobation.

The real motives of the Royalists were, as a rule, equally interested; but their personal objects were in a great measure concealed from the popular eye, at least after the King had attained his majority, under the decent cloak of loyalty. The very selfish instincts of the courtiers impelled them to array themselves under a banner on which a principle intelligible to the nation was inscribed, namely, the supremacy of the Crown. Labouring for themselves, they proclaimed themselves, and with truth, the defenders of the Throne and of order. They had thus, at once, a common interest and a public aim that knit them together and lent a sanction to their efforts. Union gave them strength, and their consistent support of legitimate authority, contrasting favourably in the public estimation with the profligate freaks of an unprincipled faction, drew to them in the end the sympathies of the nation. Condé and his friends not only fell through their own vices, after inflicting terrible calamities on the country, but in their fall incurred the inexpiable guilt of dragging down public freedom with them. They drowned liberty in sedition. The wisest and best men of their own order, the patriotic Magistrates who had contended so courageously against abuses of power, the factious demagogues themselves, dreading to

be torn to pieces by their own bandogs, saw no refuge from the woes of the realm except in unconditional submission to the Royal authority. France, wasted by a civil war which exhausted the fountains of her life, delivered up her cities to the dominion of the rabble, and enabled Spain to pluck from her nerveless grasp the trophies of years of glory, painfully awoke to the conviction that anarchy is the most insupportable form of tyranny; that even the misrule of an irresponsible Government was preferable to the organised disorder of selfish faction. And thus it came to pass that, notwithstanding that the Fronde had marshalled under its banner all the patriotism, nearly all the political and military genius, and the acknowledged representatives of the one power of the world which is more potent than genius, feminine beauty, in France; notwithstanding also the deep hatred of Cardinal Mazarin and the bitter sense of misgovernment that rankled in the heart of the nation, the star of the Great Minister again rose in the ascendant.

The proud spirit of Condé could not brook obedience, and he quitted Paris with the remnant of his troops on the 14th of October, 1652, to join the Spanish army on the northern frontier. The Duke of Orleans hesitated with characteristic

indecision until the time for either reconciliation or resistance had passed, and was banished to Blois, where he dragged out in obscurity the remainder of his restless and unhonoured career. La Rochefoucault and Beaufort submitted and made their peace with the Regent. The seditious outrages fomented by the Prince of Conti and the Duchess of Longueville at Bordeaux had produced a bad effect throughout the whole province of Guyenne, which the efforts of Lenet and the Count of Marsin, with such feeble aid as the Princess of Condé, tottering on the verge of the grave, could render, were insufficient to counteract. On the arrival of a fleet and army commanded by the Dukes of Vendôme and Candale, all the towns of the province made overtures of submission. Conti, with the baseness of a selfish and cowardly nature, secretly betrayed his brother, and attached himself to Mazarin, from whom he subsequently accepted a niece, Mdlle. Martinozzi, a dazzling beauty with marvellous golden tresses, in marriage. This alliance of his brother, at whose entreaties he had taken up arms, with his low-born enemy was the bitterest drop in Condé's cup of humiliation. Cardinal Mazarin caused the most generous terms to be offered to the Princess of Condé, the niece of his great patron, if she

would consent to remain quietly in France. But, though not expected to survive the voyage, she insisted on embarking with her son, Lenet, and Marsin, to join her husband in Flanders, where her admirable devotion was repaid by the harshest cruelty and neglect. By a most extraordinary article of the capitulation of Bordeaux, two thousand five hundred of Marsin's troops, all Frenchmen, and revolted soldiers of the army of Catalonia, were permitted to march with flying colours across the whole kingdom, and provided on the way, at the Royal charge, with quarters and provisions, to join Condé, an attainted rebel, in the Spanish camp. Madame de Longueville retired for a time to the country seat of her aunt, the Duchess of Montmorenci, a woman of saintly life, whose exhortations and example wrought a marvellous and enduring change in the fallen Queen of the Fronde. Surviving the surrender of Bordeaux for more than twenty years, her fervent repentance and exemplary conduct won the admiration of all France, and nobly atoned for the errors of earlier years.

A few days after Condé's departure, Louis XIV. entered Paris and held a Bed of Justice, in which the Prince and his partizans were again declared traitors, the celebrated Declaration of the 24th of

October, 1648, was annulled, and the Parliament submissively registered the Royal Edict prohibiting the magistrates from ever again deliberating upon affairs of State. De Retz, the mighty demagogue, whose genius had so long revelled in social confusion as in its own proper element, to whom the roar of civil discord had been rapture, who had ruled the storms of faction with a monarch's sway, was too dangerous a personage in the jealous eyes of newly established authority to be allowed to remain long unmolested in his Archbishopric. Notwithstanding the services he had rendered against Condé, and on which he reckoned to secure for him impunity, he was, after a short respite, seized upon a charge of fomenting new disturbances, flung into the Donjon of Vincennes, and thence transferred to the distant Castle of Nantes. From this fortress he contrived, in 1654, to effect his escape, and wandered many years in poverty and exile. As some comet, to the superstitious eye of antiquity, shot athwart the heavens a mysterious herald of wrath, shaking calamities from its flaming locks, the portentous genius of De Retz had blazed in the political firmament of France, brilliant, baleful, and evanescent.

His last dangerous foe removed from the scene, Cardinal Mazarin returned in triumph, and resumed

the exercise of an unlimited authority, which was never afterwards disputed. How eloquent as a symbol of his career was the device he then assumed, a rock lashed by raging billows, and underneath the words, "*Quam frustra, et murmure quanto.*" Vain indeed had been the buffetings of the tempest. The Royal Authority, so rudely assailed, towered again in such majestic strength, struck its roots so deep and wide, bound them in such inseparable union with all the chords of the national life, that to uproot it required a convulsion which prostrated Christianity itself in common ruin, and utterly swept away institutions, customs, habits, modes of thought, even landmarks, which had formed an integral part of the nation's growth, or had been incorporated into its existence for nearly a thousand years.

CHAPTER V.

THE seven succeeding years of Condé's life may be passed over briefly. They were spent in the councils and camps of Spain, in parricidal efforts to pierce the heart of his native country with the sword of a foreign enemy. In this part of his career one can admire nothing except the perverted genius that appeared even more extraordinary when labouring at the Titan task of supporting a decrepid Monarchy, than it had appeared when dealing the lightning blows which made that Monarchy totter to its base. His energy and military talent assumed proportions perfectly marvellous in contrast with the feeble, though arrogant incapacity of the Spanish Generals. The retreat from Arras, the forcing of Turenne's lines at Valenciennes, the relief of Cambray, accomplished by him almost in spite of his allies, rank among the most brilliant achieve-

ments of warfare. But his efforts were barren, except of dubious glory to himself. Not even his fiery spirit could infuse life into Spanish lethargy, or thaw the cold obstruction of Spanish pride. The resources of Spain, although still fed by a perennial stream of treasure from the Indies, were sapped by misgovernment. The bones of the veteran battalions which had shielded her decline, whitened the plains of Rocroi and Lens. And the haughty arrogance, the natural growth of irresistible power, which had descended to her children with the heritage of great deeds and illustrious names, was not only ridiculous but fatal, flaunting over mere decay. It prevented the Monarchy profiting by the abilities of the most successful Captain of the age, and kept alive an exaggerated opinion of Spain's strength in other nations of Europe, where the ignorant and the prejudiced still trembled at the bugbear of Spanish power, the mere phantom of what had been a living menace to their forefathers.

It was the policy of Cromwell, when he had subverted the Commonwealth, to distract the attention of the English nation from the unaccustomed evils of a military tryanny, and to find employment for the dangerous spirits of the army by foreign

expeditions; and his alliance was courted with the most eager solicitude by France and Spain. A brilliant modern school of English historians, turning away in the disgust of satiety from the familiar spectacle of equitable government and ordered freedom, have borrowed from the darkest ages of paganism the practice of glorifying the lawless passions of humanity; until, in the apotheosis of force, fraud, cruelty, and selfishness, we almost see reviving amongst us, in a more intellectual form, heathen superstition in its most debasing phase—the worship of monsters. Enemies of the human race, whose memories have come down to us black with crimes, and laden with the curses of mankind, are—if they have been but successful—exalted as demi-gods; while their victims, the martyrs of right and justice, are covered with calumny and insult. It is only by the demoralising influence of such teaching that the modern idolatry which burns incense to Cromwell can be explained. His career was the triumph of brute force and cunning, stimulated by fanaticism—a fanaticism which acted in complete subordination to his personal ambition, and in complete harmony with the habitual hypocrisy and dissimulation, and the un-

scrupulous policy which concealed and accomplished his designs. That he merits the praise of being affectionate in his domestic relations may be freely admitted, for, after all, he was human; and that he was a very extraordinary man is attested by his astonishing career. But his ambition was sordid and ruthless, and his genius was of the lowest order—the genius of destruction. His attempts at constructing proved egregious, and even ridiculous, failures during his own lifetime. The master-spirits of the world, to whom he has been sometimes compared, redeemed the evils of their rule, and perpetuated their names by great and enduring structures, which command the admiration or gratitude of posterity. The Roman Empire, which survived in all its changes for more than eighteen hundred years, was the legacy of Julius Cæsar. The Civil Code, the marvellous organisation, and some of the most magnificent public works of modern France, form a fitting monument to the genius of Napoleon. Cromwell left behind him only ruins—the ruins of an ancient Monarchy and of a new Republic; and his name lives in association with desolate fanes and shattered castles, and burning memories of cruelty and wrong. Nor since the death of Attila

has Europe been afflicted with the scourge of a destroyer so terrible and remorseless.

There never was a Government in England so tyrannical or so hateful to the nation as the Protectorate. It was a military despotism, in comparison with which the tyranny of Charles I. was a mild and humanising yoke. The country was portioned out into eleven districts, each under the command of a major-general, who, at will, imprisoned the persons and confiscated the estates of individuals, obnoxious on account of their principles or their wealth, under the sole authority of the Lord Protector. All but a small minority of the inhabitants qualified to exercise the franchise were deprived of political rights. Trial by jury in political causes was practically abolished by the instituting of a High Court of Justice, and the mandates of the Council of State. Laws were enacted, enormous annual contributions were imposed, the entire administration was absolutely directed by a small knot of successful adventurers, who registered the decrees of an irresponsible master at Whitehall. Three kingdoms were governed by the sword, and steeped in miseries, not that some salutary public object might be achieved, but because an ambitious soldier desired to erect for

himself the throne he had overturned, on the ruins of the Republic he had betrayed.

Several times during his rule Cromwell sought to veil his despotism under the forms of a free Government by calling a Parliament. But, notwithstanding the iron grasp of his Major-Generals on the skeleton constituencies, and the forcible exclusion of all independent representatives from the Palace of Westminster on the high constitutional grounds that, in the cant of the Saints, they were tainted with malignancy, or delinquency, or immorality, he was never able to collect together a body of Englishmen sufficiently base to become pliant tools of his ambition. Each Parliament, after a short trial, was publicly reviled by him, and then ignominiously cashiered for imputed backslidings from virtue. He attached to himself the fanatical soldiers who upheld his usurpation by arts analogous to those with which Mohammed or Mahomet had duped his Arabian followers. Joining frequently in their pious exercises, his preachings and his prayers, conceived in a turgid vein of semi-delirious mysticism—a grotesque travesty of the sublime imagery and the shadowy grandeur of the sacred writings—and poured forth in a simulated fervour of inspiration, cheated their diseased fancies into the belief that he was filled with the

Divine Spirit, that he was the chosen instrument of the Most High to establish the reign of Christ upon earth. Not that his pretensions to supernatural enlightenment were altogether charlatanism. Like the Prophet of Islam, he was to some extent a genuine enthusiast; but his enthusiasm was deeply tinctured with craft, and was used to sustain conscious imposture. All his artifices, however, failed to induce the devout warriors, who had made and could at any moment unmake him, and who, even in their most blasphemous hallucinations, were sincere, to connive at a national sin, by sanctioning his assumption of the Crown, the prize which so long dazzled and mocked his aspirations. In the end, his hypocrisy —although profound and continually fortified by profane appeals to Heaven—became too worn from incessant use to mask even from pious credulity the personal character of his aims. Detested by the whole nation, by the half that he had deceived, as well as by the half that he had vanquished; destitute of the means of paying the army that held it in subjection; broken in mind and body, by sickness, domestic calamity, and perpetual terrors of assassination, but to the last the dupe of religious delusion, the blaze of military and naval triumph that closed his domination,

gilded miserable failure. And probably the 3rd of September deserved the title of his fortunate day more for rescuing him by a peaceful death from a tragic, if not shameful fall, from an untenable position, than because of his victories at Worcester and Dunbar.

The panegyrists of Cromwell rest his claims to admiration as a ruler chiefly on the grandeur and success of his foreign policy. The able and vigorous statesmen of the Long Parliament, by the fleets and armies they created, and the haughty attitude they assumed towards foreign States, had raised the fame and power of England abroad to an unexampled height: and a large share of the glory and advantage of their measures was inherited by the Protector. But his own foreign policy was selfish blundering. The slight which had been passed by Charles I. on the Spanish Infanta had caused a permanent estrangement between the Courts of Madrid and St. James's. The Spanish Government had been the first to recognize the Commonwealth, and had maintained cordial relations with it to the end. But Cromwell, being unable to obtain from a Parliament the grants of money he needed, and being afraid of increasing the clamours and resistance provoked by the arbitrary levying of contributions, looked

with a covetous eye on the rich colonies and the treasure ships of Spain. Also regarding the exiled Charles Stuart as a personal rival, the claim which near relationship gave this Prince to assistance from the House of Bourbon led the Protector to desire a French alliance for his own security. In contempt of existing treaties, which not only good faith, but gratitude and the interests of England should have guarded from violation, he despatched an expedition to attack the West India possessions and plunder the commerce of Spain. The enterprise failed disgracefully. It called forth loud and almost unanimous disapproval at home, more particularly from the English merchants. Philip IV., although reluctant to enter upon a new conflict, to which his exhausted monarchy was unequal, protested with dignity against the Protector's perfidy and withdrew his Ambassador.

While affairs were in this state, fabulous narratives, which took shape for the greater part in the heated brains of Calvinist Ministers at Geneva, of horrible cruelties practised by the Duke of Savoy upon the Vaudois, threw England into a ferment. The Vaudois, a Protestant people in the valleys of Piedmont, who enjoyed the free exercise of their religion under a Catholic

Sovereign, having risen in rebellion without just cause, were defeated in a struggle disgraced by barbarities on both sides, and expelled from their territory. At a time when a "Popish Massacre" was the term applied to the legitimate attempt of Catholics to vindicate their civil and religious rights by arms, stories of unprovoked outrage upon their foreign brethren were sure to meet with greedy acceptance among the Puritans. The small dominant sect of enthusiasts who had endeavoured to exterminate the Irish Catholics, and who proscribed the worship of the majority of English Protestants, were especially vehement in indignant denunciation of an imaginary religious persecution. Cromwell joyfully seized the opportunity of appearing before Europe in the august character of champion of the reformed faith. The Vaudois, though reported to be perishing from cold and hunger amidst the snows of the Alps, unhesitatingly declined his offer of a settlement on confiscated lands in Ireland. But he sent Morland, as ambassador, to Turin, to mediate in their favour, and he demanded the co-operation of the King of France. Cardinal Mazarin, however, foreseeing that the disturbances in Piedmont would obstruct the treaty of alliance with England, which he ardently de-

sired, had lost no time in exercising the pressure of a powerful neighbour and ally upon the Duke of Savoy. Morland, on arriving at Geneva, found reason to distrust the statements of the Swiss Protestants, and his mediation was civilly declined by the Court of Turin. But Mazarin was able to inform the Protector that an amnesty had been granted to the insurgents through the friendly offices of Louis XIV., and that peace and good fellowship again reigned in the Alpine valleys.

This happy termination of the quarrel greatly raised the reputation of Cromwell, as it was evidently solicitude for his friendship that had dictated the intervention of the French Government; and it gained for France a potent ally against the Spaniards. Six thousand English troops were sent to join the army of Marshal Turenne. The Governor of the Spanish Netherlands at that time was Don John of Austria, son of Philip IV. and a Madrid actress, a young man full of presumption, and guided by an incapable Mentor, the Marquis of Caracena. The combined forces of France and England laid siege to Dunkirk, which was only defended by a garrison of one thousand men, destitute of supplies. Don John advanced hastily from Brussels with about fourteen thousand men, to relieve the place, leav-

ing all his artillery behind. Turenne, issuing from his lines, found the Spaniards in a position in which their cavalry, nearly one-half of their entire strength, was practically useless, while their right wing rested on an open roadstead; and a great battle, known as the Battle of the Downs, was fought. Through the errors of the Spanish Generals, the military skill of Turenne, the valour of the English regiments, and the opportune arrival of some English frigates, which, in the heat of the conflict, opened fire on the exposed flank of the Spaniards, the Allies won a complete victory. Condé's advice had been contemptuously rejected in the Spanish Council of War, his prophetic warnings had been received with scornful incredulity. It was only his brilliant charges at the head of the small body of French Cavalry which followed his fortunes, that for a time kept the day doubtful, and saved the beaten army from annihilation. "My cousin," the King of Spain wrote to him, with courteous exaggeration, "I hear that everything was lost and that you retrieved everything."

The fruits to France of the victory of the Downs were the advantageous peace of the Pyrenees, which prepared the way for the establishment of the House of Bourbon on the Spanish

throne; and her military preponderance under Louis XIV. The fruits to England were the costly acquisition of Dunkirk, afterwards sold by Charles II.; and the expenditure of oceans of blood and millions of treasure in a long series of efforts to destroy that military preponderance which was partly her own work; efforts, marked by the signal defeats of Steinkirk and Landen, of Almanza and Villa Viciosa, as well as by the splendid triumphs of Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde, and of which her national debt is a perpetual memorial. Cromwell's short-sighted foreign policy did not even promote the selfish ends he had proposed to himself. His dynastic schemes perished with him. His armaments drained his treasury and loaded him with debts; and the London merchants were so irritated by the losses occasioned to their trade by the rupture with Spain, that they refused to relieve the desperate financial difficulties which clouded with anxiety the last months of his life.

It must be confessed that if Spanish presumption and immobility had cramped Condé's operations in war, Spanish honour and fidelity nobly guarded his interests in the negotiations for peace. His restoration to all his estates, dignities, and employments, was strenuously insisted on by Don

Louis de Haro, the Prime Minister of Spain, and as obstinately resisted by Cardinal Mazarin in their long conferences on the Island of Pheasants, in the Bidassoa. The Prince generously offered to forego his claims in order to promote the pacification of Europe. But Don Louis refused to purchase a treaty on which the very existence of his exhausted country seemed to depend, by the sacrifice of a brave ally. He threatened that his master would endow the French Prince with an independent territory on the borders of France. To avoid this danger, and in consideration of the cession of Avesnes and its dependencies, Mazarin consented to reinstate Condé and his followers, with the exception of the Count of Marsin, in the advantageous positions they had forfeited by rebellion.

CHAPTER VI.

On his return to France at the end of the year 1659 Condé, after a brief visit to the Court, withdrew to Chantilly, where he passed in almost complete retirement the greater part of the eight following years. The jealous ascendency of Cardinal Mazarin, and after that Minister's death, in the year 1661, the lingering distrust of the young King, condemned the Prince to a state of inaction, which became torture to his fiery spirit, when the kingdom again resounded with joyous peals for the triumphs of its arms in Flanders. But he bore his lot without a murmur. Adversity had made him wise. He had too long tasted exile and dependence, the bitter fruits of faction, to dream of cultivating that ungrateful soil again. Even had he wished to do so, it was no longer possible. The times of political confusion were gone by. France was no longer the France of

his turbulent youth. She had passed from the throes of a great change into another phase of her life; a development excelling in grandeur and symmetry, but not vivified by the breath, nor ennobled by the dignity of freedom. Long before Louis, won by Condé's great qualities, and evident anxiety to atone for the past, called him forth again into active employment, the slow revolution which had been initiated by Louis XI., and had received such a mighty impulse from Richelieu, was consummated. The Fronde had flooded the land with a deluge of faction, and when the troubled waters subsided, the jurisdiction of the nobles, the political privileges of the Parliaments, provincial and municipal liberties, the wrecks that had remained of the venerable system of mediæval polity, all but the mere framework of feudal society, had disappeared for ever, absorbed in the growth of the most brilliant, despotic, and powerfully organized monarchy that had as yet been seen in modern Europe.

It may be doubted whether history presents to us many subjects of deeper interest, whether it be viewed in relation to its own greatness and splendour, which marked an epoch in civilization, or in relation to its permanent effects upon the political and social condition of France, than the

old French Monarchy, in the reign of Louis XIV. During the first twenty years of Louis' personal rule that Monarchy reached its culminating point. In its magnificence and its vigour, bright with all glory and with every charm, it was at once the marvel and the terror of the age. Power almost colossal, profound policy, the triumphs of war and of peace, the solemn pomp of religion, the inspiration of poetry and art, the sublime conquests of science, the flashing beams of wit, the lofty graces of chivalrous nobility, the bewitching graces of lovely, refined, and intellectual women, invested it with a grandeur and a beauty which still dazzle through the deepening twilight of two hundred years. The position of Louis XIV. was the most intoxicating that the imagination can well conceive. Of France, which, welded into indissoluble union by the deep State-craft of Richelieu and Mazarin, fostered and developed during years of peace by the wisdom of Colbert, elated with recent military successes, and filled with a warlike population, organised by Louvois, and led by Turenne, had attained a state of compact strength, prosperity, and martial ardour that menaced the independence of Europe, he was absolute master. No man—no body of men—in the kingdom ventured to dispute his will. Im-

plicit submission had come to be regarded in France as the highest political virtue. His Court was the most brilliant and polished that modern Europe has seen. It was a great focus of the human intellect, of the attributes and the arts that glorify and embellish life. No other age, perhaps, has seen, revolving around one centre, so splendid and various a system of genius as that which encircled with undying lustre the throne of the Great King. Colbert and Louvois, Condé and Turenne, Racine and Moliere, Pascal and Sevigné, Descartes and Buffon, Mansard and Perrault, Bossuet and Bourdalou shed on his royalty the light of the mind in rich prismatic rays, adorned it with the noblest trophies. At Versailles or at Fontainebleau, he breathed an atmosphere of flattery almost idolatrous; the flattery of men whose praise was immortality, the flattery of women, which meant all that youth, beauty, and the sparkling graces of refined intellect could proffer to passion. A consummate statesman, unlocking throughout his kingdom new springs of industry and enterprise, flooded it with a golden tide of prosperity. Consummate warriors made his arms the terror of Europe. To his toiling energies, peace and war alike presented the enchanted cup of glory. To his voluptuous

leisure ministered the arts of a refined luxury, not less seductive than the gorgeous dreams of young ambition, and beauty more eloquent than the almost inspired eloquence of Massillon.

The dictatorial spirit that belonged to his Government at home, Louis carried into his relations with foreign States less powerful than France. England, bound hand and foot by his policy, connived at, or openly aided his aggressions. Not only Charles II., ever spendthrift and needy, and Charles's Ministers, but the chiefs of the English opposition—the patriots, as they styled themselves—were his pensioners. The bribes eagerly clutched by members of the Cabal were not disdained by the austere virtue of Algernon Sydney. The States-General of the United Netherlands, having given mortal offence to the French Monarch by a Republican independence of bearing, which to him seemed insolent presumption, the Dutch Commonwealth contested the dominion of the seas in a memorable struggle against the combined navies of France and England, while French armies overran its provinces, and brought it to the brink of ruin.

Spain, though shorn of her former power and prestige, still clung to her lofty pretensions with a desperate tenacity. Her ambassadors still

claimed precedence over those of the other leading powers. Louis, however, far from acknowledging a superior, would not brook an equal. The consequence was that the rivalry between the Count D'Estrades, his representative at the English Court, and the Spanish representative, Vatteville, caused a dangerous tumult in London, in which the horses under D'Estrades' coach were killed, and his son and several attendants were wounded. This insult deeply incensed the French King. He sent passports to the Spanish Ambassador in Paris; and his menaces were enforced by such formidable military preparations that Spain shrank from the conflict. Philip IV. made a formal apology, and issued new instructions to his ambassadors, which practically acknowledged the pre-eminence of the French Crown.

Still more signal was the humiliation of the Pope. The Duke of Crequi, French Minister at Rome, having quarrelled with the brother of His Holiness, the insolence of Crequi's domestics provoked a collision with the Corsican Guards, in which some Frenchmen were killed. The Pontiff at once commanded ample reparation to be made, more even than strict justice seemed to require. Some of the soldiers concerned in the riot were hanged, and the Governor of Rome was dis-

missed for negligence. But Louis rejected this atonement with scorn. In order to avert the swift vengeance of the eldest son of the Church, the Pope had to disband his guards, to exile his brother, to send his nephew, Cardinal Chigi, to ask forgiveness at Paris, and to erect, within view of the Vatican, a monument recording the abasement of the Vice-Gerent of Heaven before the arrogant majesty of the most Christian King.

It was, however, into the haughty spirit of the ancient Republic of Genoa that the iron of Louis' arbitrary domination entered deepest. Genoa was no longer the powerful State whose merchantmen, freighted with the products of the East, covered the Mediterranean, whose martial prowess had alternately shaken and sustained the Greek Empire, and been a bulwark of Christendom against the Moslem power. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, by diverting Eastern commerce into a new channel, had cut off the springs of Genoa's greatness. But still, guarded by the waves that had fed her prosperity and borne the tributes of every clime to her feet, the Queen of the Mediterranean preserved the freedom and the generous spirit of more fortunate days. An honourable alliance had existed since the days of Andrew Doria between Genoa and Spain; and

when the aggressions of Louis provoked fresh hostilities between Spain and France, after the peace of Nimeguen, the Genoese equipped a fleet to support their old ally. The French Monarch, amazed at the audacity of a petty State in thus braving his power, sent the Genoese orders, in the imperious tone of a master, to disarm. The proud Republicans answered by a defiance. With a promptitude unexampled in that age, an irresistible naval force, under the command of the celebrated Duquesne, appeared before Genoa. Thirteen thousand bombs flung into the beautiful city reduced it to ruin and submission. By a fundamental law of the Republic, the Doge could not leave its territory without forfeiting his dignity. But even this antique constitution, linked to so many glorious memories, had to do homage to the pride of Louis. The chief magistrate Lescari, attended by four of the principal citizens, appeared as a suppliant for pardon in the presence-chamber of Versailles. When, afterwards, all the marvels of that prodigy of wasteful folly, where amidst scenes created at a fabulous cost to perpetuate the glories of the monarchy, ambassadors from the most remote regions of Africa and Asia mingled in the crowd of European celebrities, were pointed out to the Dodge with compla-

cent vanity, and he was asked what of all he saw most excited his astonishment, "The most astonishing thing to me," he answered, "is to see myself here." On his return to Genoa, the Senate, suspending the operation of the laws in compliance with the hard conditions imposed upon them, retained Lescari in an office which thus became the badge of his own dishonour and the servitude of his country.

Although the political position of France in the reign of Louis XIV. was so commanding, the ascendency she acquired at the same period in the domain of thought was not only loftier and more legitimate, but was far more extensive and permanent. The graceful labours of French genius in every department of literature, science, and art, and the extraordinary capabilities of the French mind and the French language for appropriating and diffusing ideas, gave her the foremost place among civilized nations. Paris became the centre of modern civilization—the capital of Europe. In all that related to letters, to taste, to manners, the French canons were the laws of the Continent. The French tongue was the language of literature, of diplomacy, and of polished life. The tragedies of Racine, the comedies of Moliere, the Provincial Letters,

were soon as familiar to the polite circles of Berlin or Vienna as to those of Paris. And long after Louis' reign had closed in gloom, and all but the memory of its glory had passed away; when a Pompadour ruled the councils and a Soubise led the armies of France, and her power had become a scoff, the unquestioned supremacy of French genius avenged the humiliation of French arms, and the mighty spell which its magic flung upon Europe, binding victorious foes in intellectual bondage, was more potent than ever.

The transition which carried France from the weakness and disunion of the period of the Fronde to the predominance she assumed fifteen years later, seems, at the first view, one of the most rapid and startling in history. But the splendid despotism of Louis XIV. was merely the natural result of general causes which had long been in operation; though doubtless that result was stamped with a peculiar character, by the action of individual minds. The ancient feudal power of the nobility had been undermined in the progress of society, laid in ruins by the blows of Richelieu, swept away in the unsuccessful revolt of the Fronde. The Tiers État vanquished in the noble struggle which the Parliament of Paris

maintained for their protection; moreover, sick of civil wars, in which turbulent princes and nobles used the popular grievances as masks for their own selfish schemes, desired only repose under a strong Government. The consequence was that the royal authority grew into a "despotism tempered by epigrams."

Mazarin, thoroughly understanding the crisis, assisted its development with rare and unscrupulous skill. On his return to France, after Condé was expelled, the Cardinal once more grasped the entire direction of the State. The King, although legally of age, was still a boy. The Queen-mother continued to the end completely devoted to her favourite. All opposition to his rule within the kingdom was crushed out, and, during an absolute administration that terminated only with his life, he employed all the resources of his deep policy to refine, to humanize, and to corrupt society. He founded the opera at Paris, collected an unrivalled library, and was a judicious patron of learning, and of all the fine arts. By his example and influence he promoted sumptuous habits, gorgeous pageants, and all luxurious and elegant amusements. To supply a safe channel for the feverish energies of the nobles, no longer permitted to expend themselves in political struggles,

he encouraged gambling, and even cheating at cards, provided it was clever. The passion for high play seized upon all, with its usual terrible fascination, and the vicissitudes of the gaming-table opened a wide door for corruption. The needy noble who had staked and lost his last crown-piece or his patrimonial chateau at hazard, or the ruined magistrate, was but too happy to find a resource in the bounty of the Minister. It was difficult to recognise, in the courtly flatterers who crowded Mazarin's ante-chambers, the furious patriots of other days, whose zeal had never wearied in reviling him as a public enemy. A spirit of luxury, of ostentation, of venality, seen in its best and worst aspects in the career of the generous and ill-fated Fouquet, soon began to infect the whole kingdom; softening down the ferocious habits contracted during a troubled period, but gradually destroying the lofty spirit of independence, which, in nobles and magistrates, had been the nurse of masculine virtues.

But perhaps the individual whose personal influence contributed most powerfully to produce such a marvellous change in the condition of France was the young King himself. If there had been few Princes who during their life-time so habitually breathed an atmosphere of flattery

as Louis the Great, there are few whose memories have been exposed to harsher criticism or more unjust depreciation. In the natural reaction of opinion the writers of Modern France seek to degrade from his pedestal one whom they detest as the impersonation of that arbitrary system, the abuses of which plunged their country into the catastrophe of 1793. Brilliant English writers of the Whig school have as eagerly disparaged the magnificent potentate whose greatness dwarfed the greatness of their idol, William of Orange. Both deal unfairly with the character of a very extraordinary man.

The reign of Louis, which began almost with his life, was, as has been shown, cradled in civil dissensions. While the Princes of the Blood and the great nobles desolated his kingdom in order to despoil his crown, the unscrupulous greed of the Minister, whose puppet he was, left him sometimes in want of the necessaries of life. Mazarin's lust of power inflicted on his young sovereign injuries far worse than the poverty occasioned by his avarice. Louis was taught to ride, to dance, to take part in pageants, to excel in manly sports and graceful accomplishments. But in the scheme of the young King's education, which the Cardinal jealously superintended, history, politics,

every study that tended to develope his mind, awaken his ambition, or teach him to govern, was carefully interdicted. Nor was this all. There are strong grounds for at least grave suspicion, there is the direct testimony on the point of the faithful La Porte, that the Cardinal resorted to means of weakening the intellect of his sovereign more odious than the exclusion of invigorating knowledge, or the influence of trivial pursuits. But the natural abilities of Louis were of the first order; and he had inherited from his mother a strength of character even greater than his abilities. Mazarin, towards the close of his career, when he felt himself withering in the icy clasp of the only enemy whom his wiles could not foil, laboured earnestly to repair the injury which his guilty ambition had caused. He then discovered, to use his own words, that Louis had in him the materials of "four good Kings and one honest man." He strove unremittingly by his counsels, by opening to his royal pupil the stores of his vast experience, the hived-up State-craft of an unrivalled politician, to teach Louis the science of governing despotically. Still Mazarin never relaxed his hold of the reins of power for a moment. To the last hour of his life he monopolised the administration. Louis did not venture

to grant the slightest favour without asking his Minister's permission. The Cardinal, remaining seated and covered, received his sovereign every morning in his cabinet, and chid Louis, after he had attained man's estate and had married, with as much freedom as though he were still a child. The young King, fettered by long habit, and still more by gratitude for the immense services Mazarin had rendered the French Crown, studiously concealed the burning impatience to rule that consumed him.† Engrossed apparently by the pleasures that crown youth and greatness as with a magic garland, he expected in silence the death of his great Minister.

Mazarin died in the year 1661, at the age of fifty-nine, the richest subject in Europe. Although he had permitted the public revenues to be mismanaged, and dissipated in luxury and corruption by the Controller General Fouquet, he confided the care of his own fortune to a young and obscure man, in whom his penetration had discovered extraordinary genius for finance. At the close of his life he presented this able servant to Louis, saying, "Sir, I owe your Majesty everything, but I believe I can repay you by giving you Monsieur Colbert." In order to screen his vast riches from inquiry after his death, and perhaps to

appease the cries of his conscience, the Cardinal when he saw his end approaching, conveyed all his possessions by deed to the King. Louis retained them for a day, and then gave them back to the dying Minister as a free gift. The amiable side of Mazarin's character was in nothing more visible than in the strength of his family affections. He had charged himself after he became Prime Minister with the education and fortunes of his six charming and accomplished nieces, the eldest three of whom had been favourite targets for the wit and scurrility of the Fronde, and all of whom afterwards played distinguished parts on the stage of life. By the marriages of Laura Mancini and her beautiful cousin, the Countess Martinozzi, with the Duke of Mercœur and the Prince of Conti, he had allied his obscure race with the House of Bourbon. Olympia Mancini, the object of the boyish passion of the young King, married the Count of Soissons, son of Prince Thomas of Savoy, became mother of the famous Prince Eugene, and, later on, inspired horror and fear in every Court of Europe by her crimes. Between Louis and Marie Mancini, the next sister, there sprang up a mutual attachment of the most ardent kind. It required all the authority and influence of Anne of Austria to

prevail on the King to conquer his inclination to make the fair Italian Queen of France. The Cardinal removed her from Court, and gave her in marriage to the Constable Colonna, the chief of the family that had fostered his own early fortunes. The hand of Hortense, the most beautiful of the sisters Mancini, was sought in vain by Charles II. of England, during his exile, and rejected by him after the Restoration. The Cardinal then selected the son of his old friend, Marshal la Meillerai, for her husband, and made them the inheritors of his name, his honours, and the bulk of his enormous wealth. Hortense was the celebrated Duchess of Mazarin.

It may not be out of place to notice the strange mystery of the Man of the Iron Mask, in connexion with the Cardinal's death. Immediately after this event the unfortunate prisoner, whose story has so excited and baffled curiosity, was committed to close confinement in the Castle of Pignerol. He was afterwards transferred to the Bastille, and, although treated with even deferential respect, his features were jealously shrouded from the eyes of his jailors by a vizor of black velvet, until the grave swallowed up his secret in the year 1703. The theory respecting him which has the greatest show of probability is that which

makes him the son of Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin. It has been confidently asserted, indeed, that the Queen was secretly wedded to her favourite during the Regency. But the Cardinal, although not a priest, had been admitted to ecclesiastical orders, which precluded marriage; and neither his antecedents nor those of his mistress placed them above the suspicion of an irregular attachment. The pride and the affections of Louis were alike interested to shield the reputation of his mother; and the maxims of his Government would oppose no impediment to the perpetual seclusion of her unfortunate offspring.

When the death of his Minister was announced to him, the young Monarch, released from a ceaseless struggle between his sense of intolerable restraint, and his repugnance to displace one to whom the French Crown owed so much, exclaimed, "I do not know what I should have done, had he lived any longer." The Court became rife with intrigues for the vacant post of Prime Minister. It seemed to many that Condé, who of late had been rapidly growing in the Royal favour, had the best chance of success. But Louis had determined, by the advice of Mazarin, to govern for himself. When de Harlai, President of the

Assembly of the Clergy, inquired to whom he was to address himself on public business for the future, the King replied, "To me." The courtiers smiled, and speculated among themselves for how long their gay, pleasure-loving sovereign would continue to waste his hours upon affairs of State. But the Royal bird, whose bright plumage dazzled them, was, in truth, an eagle, and had already begun his flight towards the sun. They soon saw, with wonder, that the docile trifler, whose highest aim seemed to be to excel in the chase, to lead a galliard with matchless grace, or to storm the bower of some coy beauty, had shot up, with a growth as sudden as that of the gourd of the Prophet, into the strongest, ablest, and most laborious ruler that had ever grasped the sceptre of the Capets.

Of unusual personal beauty, a majestic mien, and a bearing that personified dignity and grace, his every look, tone, and gesture proclaiming the Monarch; magnificent in his tastes, liberal to profusion, yet discriminating in his generosity, thirsting after fame with an unsatiable thirst, a despot by nature and by position, but making despotism attractive by noble qualities and gracious manners; uniting to rapid penetration, cool judgment, and an iron will, a lively imagination which, ever

aspiring to reproduce in life its own ideal of a King clothed with the glorious attributes of a deity, lent to his aims and actions a striking and somewhat theatrical, grandeur, Louis was exactly the Prince to become the idol of the French people. His subjects, weary alike of anarchy and of the long rule of Cardinal Mazarin, dazzled and awed by the majesty, the captivating grace, and the brilliant promise of their young sovereign, hailed his assumption of the reins of Government with enthusiasm. Louis succeeded in converting this fervid feeling of loyalty into a deep and lasting sentiment. His character was far from perfect; but it was his rare good fortune that its vices as well as its virtues promoted the consolidation of his authority. His most conspicuous faults as an absolute ruler were, in the more prosperous period of his reign, an arrogant egotism ever urging him on to spoliation and warfare, and to prodigious expenditure which ministered to his vanity but impoverished his kingdom; and the open practice of an unbridled licentiousness. He allowed the phantoms of false ambition to lure him from the wiser policy of developing the resources of his realm in peace into a career of aggression, in which he deluged Europe with blood and tears, only in the end to make shipwreck of his own

greatness and of the welfare of his people. But this policy of aggrandisement presented almost irresistible attractions to the young monarch of a restless nation, which had but just emerged from a state of turbulence, surrounded as he was by military nobles impatient of inaction, having at command the greatest captains of the age, and having for neighbours and antagonists small or decrepid states. In indulging his passion for war he at first only floated on the current of national feeling, and did not transgress the maxims of prudent, if unscrupulous, Statecraft. In enterprises inspired mainly by the personal pride and ostentation of their ruler, his subjects saw only a patriotic solicitude for the honour of France. And so long as genius, seconded by fortune and wielding resources yet undiminished, continued to crown daring projects with splendid success, the nation, wrapped in a dream of glory, abandoned its destinies, without a murmur, to a King, whom it almost worshipped as a God.

Again, the licentiousness which, personified in a succession of mistresses, long ruled the Court of Louis with more than queenly pomp and sway, cradled as it was in the lap of refinement, clothed by the graces with every charm, breathing the incense of every muse, not only enthralled in con-

g ıial fetters a young, gay, and polished nobility,
t ; even borrowed some attractions from virtue
f · those who remembered the coarse debauchery
c. the Regency of Anne of Austria.

To counterbalance these vices, which, being characteristic of the French nation, aided the firm establishment of his authority, the kingly virtues and qualifications of Louis were manifold and conspicuous. His abilities as a statesman were first-rate. His application to the business of the State was laborious and unremitting; his decisions were always carefully weighed, and generally were dispassionate. He was gifted in a rare degree with the faculty of promptly recognising men of superior merit. These he diligently sought out and preferred in every department of his service, listened to their advice, and gave them his entire confidence and support. To genius Louis was a munificent and discriminating patron. Intellectual superiority of every kind won from him an instant and generous acknowledgment. Nor was his bounty in this respect limited by the confines of his own dominions. His device was the sun, and he wished the rays of his royal beneficence to penetrate throughout the world. He not only invited celebrated men from foreign countries to adorn the Academies of Inscriptions,

Painting and Sculpture, Architecture, and Sciences which he formed at Paris, calling to the last-named Cassini from Italy, Huygens from Holland, and Römer from Denmark; but he thought it incumbent on him, as far as possible, to repair the injustice of fortune to struggling genius in every land. There was hardly a country in Europe, no matter what its political relations with France, in which some gifted intellect, pining in penury and neglect, did not find its labours encouraged or its decline cheered by a delicate munificence, which did not offer a favour, but a tribute to the sovereignty of the mind from the Great King. No monarch was ever more liberal of praise and of reward for service, or more scrupulously slow to censure; ever displayed less of caprice or of distrust in his relations with the servants of the Crown, less of the royal vice of ingratitude, or more of greatness of mind in overlooking personal affronts and injuries. No monarch ever granted a favour with so much delicacy or such enchanting grace. And although, as he said himself, every benefit he conferred made one person ungrateful and many discontented, he never allowed disappointment to ruffle the flow of his beneficence. The repugnance which he felt to inflict pain on an old minister or general was sometimes detrimental

to the public interests. He was just and magnanimous in his personal relations, a generous and indulgent master, a warm and constant friend, a placable enemy.

Yet, notwithstanding the noble and amiable qualities that made Louis XIV the greatest, and, by nature, one of the best monarchs of France, there is perhaps no other reign, partly by reason of faults of character in the ruler, but far more by reason of the position he inherited, the scenes and traditions in which he had been educated, and the abject spirit of his time, so fertile in abuses of power, in harsh and arbitary suppression of the rights of individuals and of communities, so fraught with ruin to the French Monarchy. Long before his power had begun visibly to wane, its external splendour concealed incurable decay, and almost incredible misery and meanness. The gift of Colbert, which the dying Mazarin had made to his sovereign, was one of the most precious a King could possess. The secret assistance of this able adviser having enabled Louis to detect the frauds by means of which the Superintendent of Finance, Fouquet, sought to hide his enormous peculations, he imprisoned the unfaithful Minister for life, and appointed Colbert to conduct the internal administration of the kingdom. In a very few

years Louis, following the wise councils of the great statesman, had brought the finances to a flourishing condition, almost without example in France; had fostered trade and agriculture into extraordinary activity, established the East India Company, and planted colonies to give an impulse and an outlet to commerce; created a fleet which, under a succession of famous Admirals, became a worthy rival of the navies of England and Holland; improved the administration of justice and the police; enriched, embellished and humanised the kingdom, and especially the Capital, by works of tasteful magnificence and of utility, which still attest his claims to the admiration of mankind, and by a liberal encouragement of all the arts of peace.

But associated with Colbert was another Minister, not inferior in ability, though of opposite character and aims, to whom the business of foreign relations was entrusted. This was Louvois, the son of Mazarin's old Secretary Le Tellier, and perhaps the greatest War Minister that ever lived; who, devoured by vanity, ambition, and jealousy, strove incessantly to lure his sovereign from the pursuit of pacific triumphs by dazzling his only too susceptible imagination with visions of the power and glory to be won in a career of foreign

conquest. After the death of Philip IV. of Spain, and of Anne of Austria, Louis, listening to the flattering voice of his evil genius, in preference to the earnest remonstrances of Colbert and Turenne, claimed the Spanish Netherlands in right of his wife; and in 1667 invaded them at the head of a superb army of fifty thousand men. Turenne, as Marshal General, directed the operations. Town after town fell to the French arms, which advanced without a check, until, in the following year, the triple alliance of England, Holland, and Sweden, induced the French King to conclude a peace, which left him in possession of all his Flemish acquisitions. This brief war, although it somewhat crippled Colbert's beneficent policy, did not inflict any serious wound upon the prosperity of the kingdom.

But when in 1772, Louis having made himself secure of the co-operation or neutrality of Charles II. of England, by the treaty of Dover, and the fascinations of Louise de Querouailles, attacked the Dutch with armaments on a scale so vast and complete as to terrify the other leading States of the Continent into a coalition against France, the strain of such a gigantic struggle as no modern European nation had hitherto sustained, reduced the monarchy to a state of exhaustion,

for which the immense glory and the additional territory acquired were but a poor equivalent. The wars that followed the peace of Nimeguen, maintained with ever increasing difficulty and sacrifices, and attended with diminishing results, fatally aggravated the public distress. The skill of Colbert had been taxed to the utmost to find means to support the first prodigious efforts, and the almost incredible waste of public treasure upon the gorgeous folly of Versailles, where forty millions sterling are said to have been sunk in an unprofitable conflict with nature. After the early death of that Minister, the finances fell into a state of frightful confusion. The magnitude of the calamity which befel France, when the Parliament of Paris failed to uphold the Declaration of the 24th of October, 1648, began to manifest itself in the most deplorable consequences, when an imperious Monarch, in whose hands all the powers of the State were concentrated, could no longer sustain the tottering fabric of his pride and ambition, except by cruel injustice to his people. The excessive burthens and the constant drain of war gradually crushed all the life of industry out of the miserable peasants, depopulated whole tracts of country, and stifled commercial enterprise. A multitude of useless offices were

every year created, in order to be sold, and abolished in order to be sold again. Titles of nobility, which had been borne for nearly a century, were suddenly revoked, and conferred again for fresh payments. Crown lands that had been alienated to reward service, or for other valuable consideration, in former reigns, were resumed and conveyed to new purchasers. It has been observed by De Tocqueville that if one of the subjects of the Great King had practised some of the financial expedients openly resorted to by his Sovereign, he would inevitably have found himself arraigned at the bar of Criminal Justice. The old local liberties died out throughout three parts of the realm, and survived with only a shadowy existence in the *pays d'état*. The royal Intendants and their subordinates assumed or controlled the administration of the provinces and the communes, even to the most trifling particulars. The cities of France had hitherto enjoyed the privilege of electing their own magistrates. Louis abolished this right of election, and exposed the municipal offices for sale. The nobles, stripped of all their ancient power, but with all their ancient privileges confirmed and augmented, were drawn to Court, to glitter in gilded servitude, the favoured servants of an absolute master.

But, notwithstanding their odious exemptions from public burthens, and their vexatious feudal exactions, the revenues of the nobles gradually melted away in profusion and luxury, until, in course of time, the vast majority of them, vegetating in privileged penury in their mouldering chateaux, became objects of contempt as well as of hatred to their nominal vassals.

The same policy which destroyed local liberties and centred all authority in the Sovereign, had the unforeseen and unwelcome effect of collecting all the energy and intellect of the country at Paris, which grew in extent and population with amazing rapidity. Louis, by repeated enactments, vainly endeavoured to check a development which excited his jealousy and alarm; his own despotism created the revolutionary power which so mercilessly avenged on his posterity the evils of his rule, and laid his Monarchy in ruins.

This arbitrary system of personal Government, so pernicious to the State, exercised a still more baneful influence on the Church. The provision in the Concordat concluded at Bologna in the year 1516, which conferred on Francis I. and his successors the right of nominating to ecclesiastical benefices, had from the beginning been prolific of abuses detrimental to religion; and the evil in-

creased with the gradual extinction of public liberty. Many of the French Bishops of the time of Louis XIV. showed a subserviency to the will of their Sovereign as complete as had been the subserviency of the English Bishops to Henry VIII. The question of the Gallican liberties, raised by Colbert, with the view of exalting the power of the Crown, meant in reality the servitude of the Gallican Church. Condé, a keen if cynical observer, remarked at the time that if Louis were to turn Mohammedan, the majority of his prelates would follow his example. The Catholic Church had owed her downfall in England mainly to the incredible cowardice and baseness of the Episcopacy, with the one noble exception of Cardinal Fisher. It was perhaps well for her stability in France that the French Monarch was a sincere and unswerving believer in her creed. In both cases servility to the temporal power was joined to religious intolerance. The English Bishops had had the impudence to send to the flames for theological error men more honest and blameless than themselves. The French Bishops promoted with zeal their Sovereign's indefensible measures against the Huguenots.

It was not, however, until long after the death of the Great King, until the ecclesiastical patron-

age of the realm passed through the hands of the Regent Orleans, and Madame de Pompadour, and Madame Dubarry, that it became evident how fatally injurious to religion was the political system which attained to maturity under his reign. When the nation awoke from the long, death-like torpor which followed the ruinous war of the Succession, to listen eagerly to the teachings of the Philosophers, the Church found herself exposed, through her close connexion with the State, to furious assaults, which the deadening influence of that connexion rendered her impotent to repel. Endowed with extensive possessions, which carried with them all the privileges of exemption from taxation, and of feudal service so odious and so onerous to the peasants; exacting from these, besides, the tenth part of their scanty incomes; her rich benefices filled with members of a privileged class, nominees of the Crown — the lives of some of whom cast greater ridicule on her doctrines than did all the malignant wit of the scoffers—the Church, instead of inspiring veneration and confidence in the people, became the chief object of their hatred and suspicion, and presented a vulnerable point to the atheistical shafts of Voltaire and the Encyclopœdists. Illustrious, both before and since, for some of the

brightest luminaries and most fearless champions of the Christian faith, in the hour of her greatest peril, intellect and zeal seemed dead within her. No great spiritual chief arose, divinely-commissioned, from her faltering ranks to rekindle the fervour of religion, and scatter the terrible host of her enemies. Discredited and betrayed, she fell ingloriously; and Christianity fell with her, buried under a boiling flood of rancorous unbelief. That this catastrophe was attributable to the accidental circumstance that the clerical order formed a bulwark and a component part of a political system, demoralizing in itself, and hateful to the great majority of Frenchmen, rather than to any general revolt of French intelligence from Cathólic dogmas, seems clear. When the old Monarchy and all its institutions had been swept away for ever, the Church not only erected herself again, but, being disencumbered of the temporal distinctions which had clung to her from feudal society, and despoiled of the wealth which had led to the perverting of her august functions into a profane masquerade, reestablished herself in the heart of the nation, and vindicated her claims to divine authority with an intellectual power, a fruitfulness of conviction,

and a noble independence which she had not exhibited during the 18th century.

To anyone who considers impartially the condition of the vast majority of the French people during the 18th century; ground down by the King, the nobles, and the clergy; cherishing, in their wretchedness, envy and animosity towards the privileged orders; held in pupilage by functionaries of the Crown, even to the most trivial details of their civil life, and of the exercise of their labour; saturated with the ideas of theorists as deficient as themselves in practical knowledge of free institutions, but who proclaimed with marvellous wit and eloquence that the Catholic Church was an imposture, and that the galling inequalities of society were an outrage upon natural justice and the rights of man; the frantic spirit of destruction and impiety, which amazed and horrified the world in 1793, becomes intelligible. Writers, whose opinions deserve respect, heap somewhat undiscriminating censure on the so-called principles of 1789, and seem to regard the epoch itself as the fountain-head of all the political and social changes, of an irreligious character, which the revolutionary propagandism has introduced throughout Europe. Some of the

principles asserted by the National Assembly, as, for instance, the equality of all citizens before the law, and the right of a nation to participate in the making of its laws, and in the imposing of its taxes, are founded in justice ; and although then announced, amidst triumphant pœans, as a new revelation to mankind, are as old as the most ancient, free, and well-governed communities of the world. Others tend to destroy the foundations of Christian society, and bear the stamp of the Godless intellects that gave them currency. But even these, no matter how widely scattered, would have borne comparatively little fruit, had they not found political and social conditions so eminently adapted to give them root and nourishment. The fact seems to be that the *ancien régime*, with its royal theory of divine right, borrowed from a narrow school of Protestant divines, and its pretensions to uphold religion and order, while undermining the authority of the Church, fostering class hatreds, and stifling the healthy life of political freedom, was more instrumental in disseminating the anarchical and Pagan ideas which, spreading from France, have infected the whole political and social life of Europe than all the Philosophers, Economists, and Apostles of Revolution put together.

In truth, the reverses that Christianity has suffered in Catholic countries, in recent times, must be chiefly ascribed to the lethargy that crept over the Catholic Church in her long connection with vicious forms of government. While she slept, the strongholds of opinion were surprised, and its weapons were wrested from her hands by the active zeal of her enemies. She awoke to the crash of systems and dynasties toppling into ruin, to find that the intelligence and the patriotism of nearly every Catholic land had become citadels of infidelity, and that the direction of modern thought had, in a great measure, escaped from her control. It was in those countries where free institutions, no matter how apparently hostile to it, flourished, that the Catholic principle continued vigorous and unconquerable. And it seems clear, that it is by recurring to her own ancient policy, which modern scepticism has so skilfully made its own; it is by means of independent efforts, in the domains of thought, to enlighten and guide the popular mind; by making her legitimate influence felt in political life through the sovereignty of the people—the only expression of divine right in temporal government which her theologians have ever accepted—that, humanly speaking, the Catholic

Church can recover the ground she has lost, and prevail in her present struggle of life and death against by far the most formidable alliance of intellect without faith, with power without conscience, she has been called upon to confront since the death of Julian the Apostate.

The piety that distinguished the latter half of Louis XIV.'s life was sincere and fervent; but, being impressed with the despotic character of the Monarch, it was perhaps more hurtful to his kingdom than the ostentatious profligacy of his youth had been. Not that his intolerance was exceptionally harsh. It certainly was not so ruthless as much of the Protestant intolerance of the time. The dragonnades which called forth loud cries of indignation from persecuting champions of religious liberty in neighbouring nations, were retaliation for an outbreak, stained with revolting cruelties. But, in banishing from his impoverished and depopulated kingdom a multitude of industrious citizens, gallant soldiers, and skilful officers, to augment the prosperity, and inflame with a deadlier rancour the opposition of his foes, for the offence of fidelity to their religious conviction, he sinned greviously against justice and sound policy. And a system of proselytism which used temporal motives to

coerce or to seduce the Huguenots into conformity with the established creed, sapped public morality, and directly promoted hypocrisy and scepticism.

Like the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the excesses of the Spanish Inquisition, with which Catholicism is so frequently taunted, Louis XIV.'s oppression of the Huguenots was the fruit of the jealous policy of a despotic Sovereign, not of the teaching of the Catholic Church. The Pope expressed his strong disapproval of the perverting influences brought to bear by the French Monarch on his Calvinist subjects, as being calculated to foster deceit and infidelity. It is, indeed, a historical fact, easily capable of proof, that the dealings of the Roman Inquisition with religious error in the Papal States, since the Reformation, bear favourable comparison, as regards lenity, with the proscriptions of the most tolerant Protestant power. And it should be remembered, that in a system based upon the doctrine of infallibility repression of dissent is not, what it is in systems based on freedom of judgment, a glaring violation of fundamental principle.

The censure of the Pope was only too well justified by the result. The campaign against

heresy, that culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was in every way disastrous to the victors. Numerous anecdotes, floating about at the time, bore testimony to the low estimate formed even at the French Court of the sincerity of many of the fashionable conversions. A Huguenot family of some distinction, consisting of a brother and two sisters, had embraced the Catholic faith; the ladies through conviction, but their brother with the view of pushing his fortunes at Versailles. His conduct so displeased an uncle, a staunch follower of Calvin, from whom he had large expectations, that the old man at his death left all his possessions to more distant relatives. The brother wrote to condole with his sisters on their common misfortune. "You," he said, "who are pious Catholics, can solace your disappointment with the reflection that our uncle is now in eternal torments; but for me there does not remain even that consolation." On another occasion, when a Huguenot lady of celebrity, who had separated from her lord, became a Catholic, her friends ascribed the change to her strong desire never again to meet her husband, either in this world or in the next.

It would, however, be manifestly unjust to hold Louis XIV. personally responsible for all the evils

that flowed from his rule. His political education, the memories of his boyhood, the irresponsible position created for him by the policy of his predecessors, the splendour of his early prosperity, and the adulation of his people, had a pernicious influence upon an imperious and somewhat vainglorious, but singularly noble nature. The great qualities of the Sovereign, however, only rendered his career a more striking proof of the radical badness of a system, that invested one man with absolute control over the lives and fortunes of so many millions of his fellow-creatures, and over the fate of generations yet unborn. The high praise is due principally to Louis himself, that perhaps there is no example in history of a reign equally long, and presenting such a heritage of troubled memories to the jealous vigilance of unbounded despotism, in which so little blood was shed on the scaffold for political offences.

If adversity be the true touchstone of greatness of soul, few Princes have stood the test so well as Louis XIV. In the days of his cloudless prosperity, when flushed with the insolence of victory, or drunk with the fumes of adulation, he may occasionally have forgotten he was a mere mortal. It is at the melancholy close of his career, when the declining glories of the great monarchy, which

had thrown surrounding nations into dim eclipse, were clouded by disaster; when the old King, having survived the great statesmen and generals of his prime, having survived three generations of his own descendants—his armies routed, his fleets destroyed, his treasury bankrupt, his people perishing from famine and pestilence, and uttering cries of anguish and despair, which he could only answer with tears of pity and remorse—confronted the ungenerous foes, who, having vanquished, insisted on dishonouring him, with a grand fortitude which half redeemed his fatal ambition—that he most commands our admiration.

The conduct of Louis towards the unfortunate James II. of England reflects a purer glory on his name than the most brilliant achievements of his arms or his policy. There was little in the character or proceedings of James to conciliate affection or esteem. Ordinary prudence, when the storm of invasion that overwhelmed him was yet sleeping in the distant thunder-cloud, ordinary firmness, when it had burst upon his kingdom, would, in all human probability, have saved his crown. Smitten, however, with the infatuation which seizes on those dynasties which Providence has doomed, he was deaf to the French King's warnings and proffers of aid, while the danger might have been warded

off; equally deaf to the voice of honour when it should have been boldly confronted. The imbecile recklessness with which he risked his throne was only to be equalled by the imbecile poltroonery through which he lost it. But from the moment James landed a fugitive upon the soil of France, Louis no longer saw the weak Sovereign. He saw only fallen majesty, which calamity had but scathed in order to sanctify, and whose blemishes it would have been sacrilege to scan too curiously. The noble friendship which shielded the last years of the ill-fated James, so chivalrous, so tender, which no reverses could weary, which no lapse of time nor considerations of interest could chill, is without parallel in history.

Of the Court of the Great King, at the period of its proudest splendour, Condé was one of the most brilliant ornaments. His martial genius and renown were pre-eminent, and circumstances had moulded the fiery leader of the Fronde into the most graceful and assiduous of courtiers. Louis, won by the Prince's great qualities, and his evident anxiety to obliterate the past, after a time distinguished his cousin in the highest degree by his confidence and favour.

In 1663 Condé married his son, the Duke of Enghien, to Anne of Bavaria, the daughter of his

old friend the Princess Palatine. The young lady had been adopted by her aunt, the Queen of Poland, and brought an immense dowry to her husband. When Louis attacked the Spanish Netherlands, in 1667, Condé was suffered to remain in retirement. But, in the following year, Louvois having quarrelled with Turenne, now Marshal-General of the Armies of France, the Prince, at the War Minister's suggestion, drew out a plan for the conquest of Franche Compté, and, being entrusted with its execution, over-ran and annexed the province in fourteen days.

In the war against Holland, in 1672, Condé commanded in chief, under the King, and planned the celebrated passage of the Rhine, which still lives in the Gallery of Victories at Versailles, on the canvas of Lebrun. Here he received his first dangerous wound, which incapacitated him for further service during the campaign; and what pained him more acutely, he saw his nephew, the young Duke of Longueville, the last of an illustrious race, killed by his side. It was to Louis' neglect of Condé's advice to march rapidly on Amsterdam that the Dutch commonwealth owed its escape from destruction. The time lost by the French Monarch in capturing second-rate towns, and in dictating humiliating terms of peace, gave his foes leisure to recover from their conster-

nation, and to cut their dykes. Spain, the Emperor, and several of the minor German powers came to the assistance of the States. England, on obtaining her demands, retired from the conflict; and France had to support alone the shock of a host of enemies.

In 1674 Condé sketched out a second plan of operations against Franche Compté, which resulted in the final incorporation of that territory with France. In the same year, with inferior forces, he won the great victory of Seneff over the Prince of Orange. Among his prisoners was Count Staremberg, who was sent to Rhiems, and there publicly drank the health of his late Commander. "The Prince of Orange is a man of honour," said the Count, "on whom I shall rely all my life; he promised me that I should drink champagne in Champagne, and you see that he has kept his word." When Condé returned to Versailles, Louis advanced to the head of the grand staircase to meet him. The Prince, a martyr to gout, slowly ascended the steps and entreated his Sovereign's pardon for making him wait. "My cousin," the King replied, "when one is so laden with laurels it is difficult to walk fast."

In the following year Turenne was killed in the lines of Stokhofen, as he was reconnoitering the position of the renowned General Montecuculi,

before fighting a decisive battle. His fall was mourned by friend and foe. "There," exclaimed his great antagonist, "died a man who did honour to man." Louis paid the memory of the illustrious Marshal the highest tribute it was in his power to render, by ordering his remains to be deposited at St. Denis among those of the Kings of France. The French Army, disheartened by the loss of its Commander, retreated in confusion across the Rhine, closely pursued by Montecuculi; and Condé was summoned in haste from Flanders to defend Alsace. On assuming this perilous command, he said, "How much I wish to converse only two hours with the shade of Turenne, so as to be able to follow the scope of his ideas." It almost seemed as if he had obtained his wish; so completely did he subordinate his own impetuous genius to the more cautious spirit that had guided the strategy of his old friend and rival. By skilful manœuvres he foiled the efforts of the Germans to penetrate into France, and finally compelled them to recross the Rhine. This was his last military service to his country. Although still hardly past the summer of life, the excesses and fatigues of his youth had brought upon him the decrepitude of old age. Severe attacks of gout distracted his mind and crippled his body. He therefore wisely judged that it was time for

him to retire under the shadow of his hard won laurels; and at the close of his campaign against Montecuculi, he bade a final adieu to the profession of arms.

The prosperous tenour of the Prince's career since his reconciliation with his Sovereign had been chequered by two untoward events—one political, and one domestic. The throne of Poland having become vacant, an influential party in that kingdom solicited him to accept the crown. He was anxious to comply; his election was scarcely doubtful; but Louis refused his consent. Reasons of State policy were alleged; but it is probable that some lingering distrust and jealousy of his cousin influenced the King's decision. Condé bowed to the will of his Sovereign with the unmurmuring obedience which had come to be regarded in France as the highest political virtue.

The second event has left a deep stain upon Condé's memory. The devoted love, the heroic courage, the extraordinary merits which the Princess of Condé displayed during the Bordeaux war, had failed to conciliate the affection of her husband, or the esteem of his family. And, through some distortion of nature, the son, who had been her joy and her solicitude during the vicissitudes of that remarkable struggle, became, when he grew up to manhood, the worst enemy of his mother.

Some words of menace and insult addressed to her in her own chamber by a footman named Duval, followed by a murderous assault, aroused vague suspicions. Unfortunately for her, it required only a breath to ripen suspicion into conviction in the minds of those who had the control of her destiny. A secret investigation was held by order of the King. At its termination the Princess was hurried into close confinement, and compelled to surrender her large patrimony to her son. Her prison was the stern old Castle of Chateauroux, in Berri, built in the tenth century, the same melancholy abode to which she had been exiled by Anne of Austria, before the war of Bordeaux. Louis shortly afterwards promised Condé that her imprisonment should be perpetual. Even in that day the belief in her innocence was general. The sober, searching light of time, which reveals much that is lost in the dazzling glare, or in the deep shadows of contemporaneous life, has established it more clearly. She appears to have been sacrificed to the dislike of her husband, the pride of his family, and the avarice of her unnatural son. In the sad solitude of her prison, Claire de Maillé completed the weary cycle of her existence. Her own family were all dead. The bitter blast of adversity killed her friends.

No ray of sympathy or of hope cheered the gloom of the long captivity in which her life slowly wasted away. Forgotten by all, more than twenty years rolled by before death, in unbarring her welcome passage from her living tomb to that where he reigns, reminded the world that she had existed. Even the grave could not shield her from injury. The evil fortune which had dogged her footsteps during life, pursued all of her it had power over, to her last resting-place. In after years her sepulchre was violated, and her dust was scattered to the winds. Truly, the story of this Princess, so gentle and so loving, so adorned by virtues and talents, and yet the victim of a relentless destiny, which sowed her path with sorrows, almost from the cradle to the grave, is one of the saddest recorded in history.

The evening of Condé's life was gilded by the rich glow of a splendid prosperity. The ruin which years of civil war, exile, and peculation had wrought in his immense revenues, was repaired by the able management of Gourville, to whose assistance he had recourse after his return to France. His time was passed chiefly at Chantilly—where art decked with its rarest gems the abounding charms of nature,—in superintending the education of his grandchildren, in beautifying his

unrivalled gardens, and in the enjoyment of a brilliant society. It was his greatest pleasure to assemble around him eminent poets, painters, philosophers, and men of science, whose intellectual strife, the clashing of mind with mind, from which flashes of divine light, immortal ideas, emanate, he relished with the keen delight of kindred genius; and whom he loaded with benefits. His occasional visits to the Court were repaid by the distinguished favour of the King, and by the boundless admiration of the fair and the brave. In an age of licentiousness and impiety Condé had been notorious as a *roué* and a scoffer. And when that age had passed away his irreligious sentiments remained unchanged. His friends long despaired of his conversion. But the conversion of the Princess Palatine, who had herself declared that such an event would be the greatest of miracles; and, above all, the exemplary death of his sister, the Duchess of Longueville, after she had atoned by nearly thirty years of penitence for her excesses during the period of the Fronde, shattered the rind of scepticism that enfolded his heart. The springs of religion, which had seemed dried up within him, unsealed by a dread hand, burst forth again. And the promptings of his better nature were

strengthened by arguments which flowed, burning with divine fire, from the lips of Bossuet. After repeated conferences with the Bishop of Meaux, Condé, in 1685, publicly returned to the bosom of Christianity. His submission to the Church was a severe blow to infidels. Voltaire declares that age made a driveller of the hero of Rocroi. In the same year, his grandson, the Duke of Bourbon, married Mademoiselle de Nantes, one of the children of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan. The Duchess, not long afterwards, was attacked with small-pox at Fontainebleau. The old Prince hurried off from Chantilly, to watch by her sick couch, but the agitation and fatigue he underwent proved fatal to his debilitated frame. He died at Fontainebleau, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, penitent, and resigned, amidst universal regret, leaving behind him a name immortalised by his own great actions, and by the eloquence of Bossuet.

THE END.

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018